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THE PERIL OF BREAD

The
PERIL OF BREAD

By

J. B. LAWRENCE, Executive Secretary

HOME MISSION BOARD

of the

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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TO

The First Baptist Church of Shawnee,
Oklahoma, where I spent six happy
and, I hope, profitable years as pastor,
and where these sermons were first
preached

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INTRODUCTION

Because of the innate selfishness of the human race, Christians have had to deal continuously with the problem and the peril of materialism. Carnal desires are so imminent and the seeming gratification of them so immediate that many Christians in every age have been tempted to turn the entire system of Christian truth into a mere economic scheme to procure and to distribute wealth equitably among the people. Others have swung to the opposite extreme. They have become totally and criminally indifferent toward social and economic problems. The two groups have been so distinct that we have today two absolutely different and almost clashing schools of thought in regard to the gospel of Christ in both its redemptive and its social aspects.

When a man who has experienced the saving grace of God deals in clear-cut fashion and with convincing logic with this great problem, he renders inestimable service to his day. Dr. J. B. Lawrence has rendered just this type of service. He himself is a thoroughgoing Christian, a man who believes in salvation by grace, but who believes also that anyone who experiences regeneration should attempt to practice the Golden Rule in his daily life.

In reading this book one will be impressed with the absence of a long bibliography. This absence bespeaks what I think is the real virtue of the book.

It is not a compilation of ideas, but it is an outpouring of the author's own life, of his own convictions, after many years of study and experience in the relationships of life. He has given us the results of some genuine, creative thinking.

In different ways and from different approaches he has declared the truth which our Lord had in mind when he said, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit." This process of bringing the Christian truth to bear upon human society is scriptural and logical. It is based upon the universal fact of depravity, relies wholly upon the transforming power of divine grace to change sinners into children of God, and concludes that all Christians must work out in life, in human society, just exactly what the Spirit of God has worked in them.

In this day of confusion and universal emphasis upon physical force and material values, Dr. Lawrence has brought to us a timely message—one which Christians must hear, must accept, and must put into practice. It will be fatal to our churches if we as Christians have no concern in the future about anything except the new birth, utterly ignoring all the social obligations which rest upon followers of Christ; but it will be fatal also to human society if we as Christians ignore the new birth, giving our full time and thought to external adjustments and materialistic objectives. We must gear our lives to the great task of leading men everywhere to repent of their sins and to believe on Christ as Saviour. Then we must continue our efforts to teach and to train

these men who are new creations in Christ to follow a course of behavior and conduct in all their relationships of life "as becometh saints."

ELLIS A. FULLER, *President*
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I

THE PERIL OF BREAD

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.—MATTHEW
4:4

The fundamental error in living is to mistake the means for the end; to have ample and abundant things to live by and nothing worth while to live for. In the temptation on the Mount, Christ is tested at this point. The purpose of the tempter is to turn him from the means and method of his mission and thereby pervert the end of his ministry. He would turn Christ from the purpose for which he should live to the means by which to live.

Notice the strategy of the devil. Jesus had been fasting and praying for forty days. So intense had been his concern about his spiritual interests that he had overlooked completely his physical needs. When he became conscious of hunger the devil came to him in the livery of benevolence and made a suggestion that seemed to be perfectly natural, simple, and harmless. In effect he said to Christ: "You are hungry. If I could I would make bread for you. If you are the Son of God, you have power to work miracles, so why go hungry? You made these stones in the beginning, why not turn them into bread now?" Very plausible, but what about the final result? Ah! that is the crux of the whole matter.

In this suggestion there is the thin edge of the wedge that would finally have separated Christ from the higher conception and use of his God-given power. If at the devil's suggestion Christ had turned stones into bread for his own use, it would not have been long until the devil would have said, "Now turn this bread into stones for my use."

The devil never means well by any suggestion he makes. He is set to destroy souls, to wreck lives, to sidetrack holy intentions, and to thwart righteous impulses. He wants to turn our virtues into vices, our prayers into presumption, and our religion into blasphemy. He would have Jesus lift himself, by the power that was his as the Son of God, above the conditions by which he was limited as the Son of man. But Jesus refused to separate himself from his brother man in the flesh. He came to share with man all the experiences of human life, sin excepted, and nothing could swerve him from his determination. The purpose for which he lived lifted him above the appeal of immediate need, made him impervious to the challenge of the spectacular, and armed him against the false promise of success through the surrender of principles. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Bread is necessary. Physical needs must be met. But much depends on what one does to get bread. Satan said, "Command that these stones be made bread." But Satan had more in mind than bread; he was thinking about something vastly more sig-

nificant and far-reaching than bread. He was challenging Christ to make bread. But bread, in this connection, is a type of all that is physical and worldly; it symbolizes the whole visible economy of life—all that range of supplies, helps, and supports upon which men depend to keep themselves alive, and to which they look to make life comfortable and enjoyable. It covers the whole economy of food, drink, clothing, and shelter; the totality of things which minister to the senses, to power, to responsibility, and to world honor. The devil was asking Christ to use his divine power to procure bodily comfort; to choose a life of ease instead of the bare, hard stones of the wilderness; to avoid suffering and hardship and Calvary in his mission of service for the world.

I

We have here the advocates of two kinds of life. The devil, the advocate of the earthly, the physical, the material, says: "Turn these stones into bread." Christ, the advocate of the spiritual, says: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The question raised is, How shall we live? The devil answers this question one way; Christ answers it another. The devil would have us believe that man can live by bread alone. His program is "Eat and live." That is the narrow conception he would give us of our wonderful personality. Christ tells us that eating is not enough. Life is too large to be crammed

into a program of bread; we live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The peril in living is to overlook the spiritual. Man is a composite being with both a physical and a spiritual nature. From the physical nature come the clamorous appetites and innumerable needs of the body. These are so continuously insistent that the great temptation is to overlook the spiritual and live as if there were nothing of fundamental value save what we can see, touch, feel, and taste; that we live only for the things bread represents. Such an idea of life turns us from the ends for which we should live to the means by which to live. The peril of bread is to have everything to live with and nothing to live for. Here is the great peril to man and to man's civilization. Unless the spiritual end of living can be established in personal character and social justice, our civilization will wreck itself with the misuse of its own vast resources.

God made man to live gloriously. He fitted out the world in which man lives with the furniture of grandeur. The doorway of man's entry into being is curtained with the drapery of seriousness. The mystery of his existence, the powers with which he is endowed, the high aspirations of his soul, and the wonderful things he is capable of doing affirm his nobility. That he was made for a noble purpose every outward thing affirms. He is the central figure in the creation of the world. He is the lord of this planet. Formed out of the dust of the earth but destined for heaven, he is the link between the

material and the spiritual. Reason, which underpins his moral nature, makes him unique and superior; it adds the characteristics of responsibility and self-determination; it exalts him above all beings that are visible but which perish, and associates him with those things that are invisible but which remain. The image of God, in which man was created, gives the basis for man's spiritual regeneration and makes it possible to unite heaven with earth and earth with heaven in a redeemed personality—the material with the spiritual, the spiritual with the material—in a new human race in Christ (Romans 5:12-21). To really live means to realize this union with things divine and eternal through Christ; it means a conscious fellowship with God in Christ. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

II

The temptation to live by bread alone comes to individuals in all walks of life. We all have our wilderness experiences with the same devil that Jesus met; and the temptations are, in essence, the same. The devil assures us, in some form or other, that all we need is bread; that to gain a competency, to live in physical ease and security is the only thing worth striving for. Such living, however, leads men into all sorts of unethical and wicked practices. Out of this kind of living grow crookedness in business, connivance at wrongdoing to gain

favor, illegal and immoral practices, and the compromising of principles for personal advantage.

Such living dwarfs the soul. Man possesses certain powers—powers for work, study, sacrifice, suffering—which cannot be satisfied by earthly things alone. If men live by bread alone, the higher elements of the soul—conscience, aspiration, benevolence, faith, hope, love, righteousness, self-sacrifice, self-denial—the spiritual graces which make life rich and glorious will be undernourished. Work in the office, in the store, in the shop, and in the marts of trade may supply physical needs, but there are also spiritual needs which must be met. The soul longs for God. Conscience cries out for truth and right. Adoration seeks the Saviour. Love looks for the Holy One. Hope and faith are in search of a divine One to love and to trust. It is only when one lives by the Word of God that these supreme and superior aspirations of the soul are satisfied. Putting bread in the cupboard will not meet the needs of a hungry soul. The soul must have more than gold and houses and land and position; it must have more than bread. These things will not nourish the immortal spirit of man. The soul must have life, and Christ alone can give life.

Living by bread alone will provide us with the means of living; but it will leave us short on the true purpose of life. Take the wonderful inventions which the genius of this age has produced; they minister to our comfort and to our pleasure, but they have only given us an improved means to an un-

improved end. The movies will serve as an illustration. This marvelous invention might be used as a means to intellectual and spiritual culture, but instead it is being used in a crass commercialized way for personal profit without concern for the influence it has upon the morals of the people.

This is true of many of the mechanical devices produced by this machine age. In our use of them they make it easier for us to live, but they do not make our living more righteous. And why? Because living by bread alone will not build up the moral and spiritual life of the people. Our moral nature demands that we live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Christ's theory of life is entirely different from the bread theory of the devil. To Christ there is something superior to the gratification of fleshly desires, even though it be to sustain the body. To die may be more important than to live, but whether we live or die hinges on God's will for us—on "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Just as the bread we eat is assimilated in the process of digestion and rebuilds the tissues and muscles and nerves and blood and bone of the body, making vigorous and strong the physical life, so does the Word of God, believed and lived, make alive the spiritually dead soul; it rebuilds the spiritual and moral powers and makes strong and righteous the character. Belshazzar thought that bread was first when he reveled in the splendor of Babylon and feasted with a thousand of his lords, but God's judgment was,

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." To live as Christ would have us live means to correspond with the highest, to be in harmony with the best. It consists in character, in relationships, in fellowships. He alone lives who is in tune with the holiest harmonies of the universe.

He lives who lives to God alone,
And all are dead besides;
For other source than God is none
Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite
His love as best we may;
To make His precepts our delight,
His promises our stay.

III

Living by bread alone is a menace to nations as well as to individuals. Nations that live by bread alone, that make commerce, manufacturing, and wealth-gaining their chief concern are headed for disaster. When we journey with Gibbon and Hume, Tacitus and Juvenal through the ruins of the empires of Babylon, Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome, we find that it was living by bread alone that brought on the decay of these mighty empires. The glory of the kingdom of the Caesars is no more. The tourist today wanders over the Palatine and peers down into the choked vaults of Caesar's palaces at the wreckage of a past glory. The antiquarian rummages where Nero's fishponds gleamed, and climbs along the broken tiers of the Colosseum

from which the culture, beauty, and fashion of ancient Rome looked down upon gladiatorial contests. Rome was then living by bread alone, but the glory of that mighty empire of the past has long since crumbled to dust.

Does this fate await America and the nations of the earth? Most assuredly, if they live by bread alone. The fact of most convincing evidence is the present condition of chaos into which the world has been plunged. We are at a crisis because the things which we set as a goal and which we imagined would be our salvation have broken down. With easily the all-time record in the field of material progress, we suddenly find that the things in which we placed our confidence for securing prosperity and peace have failed us and left us bewildered in mind, and sick at heart. This fate will always await us when we try to live by bread alone. Let the nation banish God's Word from public and private life; let it take for profit and pleasure the day God has consecrated to holy worship; let it make gold its god, worldly ambition its high priest, and pleasure its chief objective, and the time will come when all the splendor of its achievements will be as the dust of Egypt or as the ruins of Babylon. If our nation would live and flourish, it must live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

History is replete with illustrations. When and where do we find the evidence of moral and spiritual strength?—in times of prosperity when men are living by bread alone? By no means. The times

called good because of material prosperity are often bad times for a nation. Take the years following World War I. Were they good times? From the standpoint of bread they were, but what do the records of eternity hold? The recording angel has no doubt written them down as bad times,—bad for everything that makes for real progress and prosperity. Many weary years will pass before we get away from the bad effects of those supposedly good times. The wild speculation, the decay of moral character, the collapse of personal integrity, the growth of selfish cynicism, the decline in religious faith, the disregard for established authority, and the disposition to throw overboard all standards of right and wrong that came with these years, will long affect us. Good times for a nation are not a product of material prosperity alone. The great faiths that have been to the world pillars of cloud by day and fire by night to lead it through the wilderness of doubt and despair, have been born out of times when men lived by “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

In Jewish history the reign of Solomon marked the highest period of national glory and power. But this age did not produce the great prophets of Israel. Israel was then building and growing materially, and, as is usual in periods of prosperity, failed to develop the moral and spiritual strength necessary to produce great religious characters. The crisis that followed Solomon's reign was largely the fruitage of prosperity. Later, when Israel was in exile,

torn from her native land, surrounded by the paganism of Babylon, completely immersed in a godless social order, and held in bondage in a strange and alien country, she produced men who saw new things and spoke new words about Jehovah. They began then to live by God's Word and as a result were prepared for the return under Cyrus to their native land, and for the restoration of their national and religious life.

The same thing is true in the history of Christianity. Christianity in apostolic times won amazing victories against the opposition of a pagan world. The church of Christ was established in the midst of a wicked civilization because the early Christians lived by the Word of God and not by bread alone.

The perilous days of the church are not the days of her weakness and unpopularity. When the world is hostile, these are the days when the church is driven to the shelter of the throne of grace where she finds her strength. The days of peril for the church are the days of prosperity. When the church has grown into sufficient strength and wealth to command popular favor and the world begins to smile graciously upon it, when men of the world patronize it, and men in the church patronize the world—these are the days of danger. The church is in peril when it lives by bread alone.

Living by bread alone takes the spiritual emphasis out of life; and without the spiritual emphasis the true values of life are wanting. Is not this our trouble today? Why are we halting and hobbling

along when we should be going with the speed of the wind to preach the gospel to the people of all nations? Is it not because we have lost the spiritual emphasis? Without the spiritual emphasis, love and devotion and sacrifice are wanting. There is no soul-absorbing passion for a lost world. If Christ were to come today, would he not tell us that we were trying to make our religion too easy? Christianity means work. It means work in a dirty world. Christianity means peril; blows given and blows taken. The world is to be redeemed by Christians; and those who are called of God to this task should not be ashamed to scour and scrub.

IV

The age in which we live is beset by many perils. Forces sinister and mighty are attacking the foundations of our civilization. Principles hoary with age are being dumped into the waste-heap. New and strange doctrines are current. A great change is taking place in the thinking of men. For centuries the world has been working toward a government of law for the government of men. During these centuries certain principles have been established regarding property and the rights of individuals. These rights were safeguarded by magna cartas, constitutions, bills of rights, and other legal enactments. But among millions today this doctrine is losing its place. A new idea is finding place in the thinking of men. Conceived in the womb of materialism, born in the throes of social strife, nursed

at the breast of economic collapse, this new idea of totalitarianism is flaunting its flag in the face of civilization and threatening the destruction of the ancient and cherished institutions of men. The rights of the individual are threatened. The integrity of the state is threatened. The church is threatened. Civilization is threatened.

What will be the outcome? That depends. If we turn back to the hills from whence cometh our strength; if we set ourselves to a rediscovery of Christ and his way of life; if we underpin our social, civic, and economic life with the Word of God and shoot our civilization through and through with the spirit of Christ, we will most surely pass through the struggle of the present into a new day of moral and spiritual strength, a Christlike social order. But if we turn from the Word of God, if we worship at the shrine of the mammon of greed, if we yield to a life of self-indulgence, if we are swept into the maelstrom of materialism and banish God from our lives—in a word, if we live by bread alone—then will we most surely pass through the valley of the shadow of moral and spiritual decay into the final dissolution of civilization.

There is hope. The world still has the Lord Jesus Christ, and no matter how far it may wander from God's purpose and plan, it can, if it will, come back to him. Christ is the world's supreme asset. In the dark places in the history of the past centuries the glorious character of Christ has shone again and again, a glory out of the gloom, a light so luminous

that the darkness of the world has been banished. But in every instance where this light has shone out in the darkness it has done so because somebody has caught the gleam of Christ in his own life and has shown to the world Christ's way of living. The bright spots in history have been revivals of vital Christianity. Our supreme need is to rediscover Christ and his way of life.

My friend, have you discovered Jesus and his way of living? Have you found something to live for, some task to do, some goodness to achieve, some beauty to create, some soul to save? To live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is to look and work for the coming of the kingdom of God. The crucial conflict in civilization today is not God versus no God. That is important, but the deepest conflict between Christianity and anti-Christianity is between two ways of living, living according to the ideals and standards of the world and living according to the mind and spirit of Christ—living by bread alone or living by the Word of God. With the might and power of the Christ of the temptation mount, let us say to all the devils of this age who are telling us to turn the stones of social, economic, racial, individual, and national need into bread, that man does not live by bread alone, but by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

II

THE CHRIST OF EXPERIENCE

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto
you.—1 JOHN 1:3

In a corridor of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston hangs a most interesting picture. It is a picture of the Sphynx, the desert, the night, and the child Jesus. One feels as he looks at the picture the intensity of the deep dark of the sky stretching out into infinity, with the stars gemming its brow. In the distance is the River Nile, a dark streak in the white sand of the desert. Beside a smoldering fire, the smoke of which rises straight into the night, lies Joseph asleep, and hard by is a donkey tethered, while in the background rises the Sphynx—the giant form of a lion with a human face, and crouched with outspread paws—which for six thousand years as a silent sentinel of the desert has been gazing into the sky as if to pierce the riddle of the universe. The central thing in this picture is the mother of Jesus, with the Babe nestled in her arms, peacefully sleeping within the paws of the Sphynx. The picture symbolizes the struggle of the ages for a solution to the mystery of the infinities of time, of faith, of creation, of birth, of death, and of immortality. All the animal strength of the lion waits on the intelligence of the questioning face of the man as it peers into the heavens, while nestled in the embrace

of its mother and cradled in the arms of the Sphynx, rests in peaceful but prophetic repose the Babe of Bethlehem, the answer to it all: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

I

Here is the promise of the world's redemption. God had said in the long ago when man sinned that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. That ancient promise is fulfilled. The seed of the woman has come. The Christ of glory is here. This Christ is the center of the Christian religion. The value of every claim it makes is determined by the place we give to him. It is in this that Christianity differs from the man-made religions of the world. Buddhism, Brahmanism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, and Mohammedanism are based upon the teachings of their founders. Remove the founders and the systems remain. But Christianity is based upon the Person of Christ. Remove him and Christianity is gone, for Christianity is Christ wrought into the faith and experience of men.

This Christ—the Christ of the Bethlehem birth, the Christ of the Nazareth boyhood, the Christ recognized by the Father at his baptism, the Christ of the wilderness temptations, the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount, the Christ of Calvary, and the Christ of the resurrection and ascension—is the supreme and superlative need of the world today. He comes with light and life to the world. He touches the whole gamut of man's existence and brings peace and a sense of completeness into every circumstance of life. He enters the marts of trade and holds up the Golden Rule as the standard of all business transactions. He sets out the Christian principles as the basis for the settlement of all national and international problems. He meets the scientist on the threshold of investigation and conditions his attitude by affirming that God is the source of origin and that his will is the ultimate purpose. In the realm of morals he declares the eternal principles which are the standards of creed, of conduct, and character in all the affairs of men. He alone can create righteous conditions in the world and bring the nations of the earth in their personal, national, and international relation into the fellowship of righteousness and peace.

In these days of anxiety and uncertainty the world needs to see Jesus as John saw him. It is not an abstract creed nor a religious ritual that we need, but a divine Saviour. This is precisely what John presents to us for our faith. He is witnessing to a fact, to a personality, real and imperishable.

He is not formulating a doctrine, nor setting out an abstract formula, nor giving a collection of definitions, nor proclaiming even a theory of God and the soul and the future life; he is giving to us the fundamental fact of the gospel, that God has come into the life of the world, in Christ, who is not only an historical character, but also the eternal life which was with the Father, and is now manifested unto us.

John dates the religion of Jesus back to eternity. In his Gospel he says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In his first epistle he says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . declare we unto you." He seems to be reaching out to encompass the whole horizon of eternity in his thought about Christ. It is this horizon that is so often left out in the thinking of men about Jesus. The things they say within narrow limits may be accurate, they may be painfully accurate, but we need something more than accuracy; we need inspiration, atmosphere; we need the subtle interplay of forces which stir our imaginations and end in a challenge before which our wills bow as before a new and sacred Presence. A bench, a chair, or a table does not need atmosphere; but a tree needs the whole horizon. It needs the whole sky to give it an environment in which to live. So is it with the great trees of righteousness, the trees

of truth, the trees of Christian history; they need the background of deity, they need the atmosphere of eternity. This John gives us. He carries us back into infinity. He gives us the horizon of eternity as the landscape of our religion. He anchors our thought to the throne of the unbegun One. He will have everything from the beginning.

II

This is necessary for completeness. A divine religion cannot begin at a point in history; it must begin where God began. To John the redemptive work of Christ dates back to eternity. He thought of the earthly life of Christ as the prolongation in time of what had been going on in the unseen from eternity. He looked up from the miraculous conception to the Holy Thing conceived in the womb of humanity. He looked back through the windows of time into eternity, back behind all human genealogies, back to the divine activity itself. He did not believe that philosophical speculation could explain the mystery of Christ's wonderful life. He knew that Divinity revealed was the central fact in the economy of grace. He probed to the very heart of the divine religion when he said: "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

Let us look for a moment at the Person of Christ as John evidently saw him. Jesus of Nazareth was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin.

There is here a similarity between the manner of the creation of man as described in Genesis and the begetting of Christ, and yet a difference. God in the beginning took hold of the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life, and man became a living soul. In the birth of Christ, God again takes hold of the dust of the ground—not in its first consistency, but the dust of the ground as it had been transformed into Mary, the mother of Jesus—and by the infinite miracle and mystery of the virgin birth he incorporated himself in humanity so as to become Jesus the Christ, the second Man, the last Adam, the Redeemer of mankind. This makes Christ unique. He is indeed a man, but different in his origin from all other men. He is God incorporate with man as God has never been incorporate with man before—bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, life of our life; an infinite mystery but a glorious fact.

This conception of Christ as the Eternal Life, as one with the Father, as of the same essence and being with God, is the foundation upon which the Christian religion rests. If Jesus Christ be divine, if he is truly the Son of God, then we have a correct history of his life in the gospels; then he made a correct representation of himself when he said, "I and my Father are one"; then he performed the works which are accredited to him; then he died for our sins and rose again for our justification. If he be not the Son of God, then he is a poor, lonely man, wandering about Palestine; then there is no

final triumph, for Jesus is after all only one of the world's great teachers and reformers. Yea, more than this, if Christ be not the Son of God, he is one of the world's most deceived and desolate men. But Christ is God. His works attest his deity, and historic Christianity grounded in the revelation which he made of himself through the apostles, has all along believed and taught his divine Sonship. This is the thing to which John is witnessing. Planting ourselves here in our faith, we cannot be moved. Holding this faith, we can say that we believe that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit—equal in every divine perfection, co-existent and eternal—and believing this we have an unchangeable, an unmovable foundation for our faith. This is one side of the immovable arch of Christianity.

III

John is, however, speaking of a transaction as well as of a person. He does not say "he who," but "that which," an expression which includes all thought, all life, all personality, and all action. The apostle is describing not the Word simply, but the *living* Word—the Son of God made flesh. He is witnessing to that divine transaction by which the eternal Word is brought into the life of humanity and becomes Life of our life. He would assure his readers that the life of Jesus of Nazareth was simply and sincerely the human life of God. This divine transaction is the fact upon which our fellowship is

founded; and this fellowship in Christ is the foundation for the other side of the arch of the Christian religion.

This is the foundation fact of our faith which is most constantly denied by Satan and most persistently proclaimed by the apostles. John's testimony is positive. This is what we want. It is what the world wants. We do not want to know what some have imagined and speculated and doubted; we do not want to know the history of any man's mental turmoils and tumults and terrors. If they can tell us what they have heard and seen and felt, then we are ready to listen to their testimony. This is what John does. He gives us his personal witness to the human life of God.

The incarnation lifts the religion of Jesus out of the realm of small things. Many have treated Christianity as if it were only a system of doctrine, something that could be handed out in verbal packages or expressed in definitions as occasions might demand. One had as well try to cut the sky into inches and give it away with finger and thumb. Can one snip a bit out of the wind and say, "That is a sample of the tempest we have"? So with this heaven-filling, eternity-filling, religion of Jesus; it breaks up the vessels of words and overflows into the larger categories of feeling and aspiration. John seems to stagger under the thought that burdens his mind. He labors for expression. He heaps assurance upon assurance with elaborate emphasis. It is because he sees what he fears others will not

see—that this religion of Jesus dates back in Christ to eternity.

John would, however, have us know that the Christ of eternity is our brother and our friend. He gives special emphasis to this fact. He tells us about One with whom he has had personal association. He is not talking about one whom he saw walking out now and then by himself; one to be whispered about as a kind of ghost, a heavenly visitor who reported to the apostle who went out to see the strange one; he is talking about One with whom he has had personal association. The Christ he proclaims is the Christ of human history, the Christ of personal association, the Christ of personal fellowship and brotherhood. Literally, he is talking about One with whom he had eaten salt. To eat salt with a man in the olden times was to have companionship with him, to trust him, and to make covenants with him. When men laid salt upon the sword and dipped their fingers in it, that dipping dissolved the sword; it was no longer a symbol of war, but a symbol of peace. The apostle as much as says: "We have been associated with Christ; we have heard him preach; we have talked to him; we have been melted to tears by the pathos of his words; yea, we know him, and can, therefore, speak of him with authority."

IV

This testimony concerning Christ is given so that those to whom he testifies may have fellowship with

him in his personal experience of Christ. "That which we have seen and heard," says he, "declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and our fellowship truly is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." John's aim in writing is that the great High Priest's prayer may be fulfilled—that believers may be one in that communion of which the unity between the Father and the Son is the pattern and the basis; may be joined together in the same body, the same belief, the same knowledge, the same ends and aims, the same hopes, the same destiny. But this can only take place when they have come into the experience of the same life. Christianity to John is more than a history, more than an argument, more than a theology; it is a spiritual revelation of the divine Christ to the spiritual nature of man. On the part of man it is not an attitude simply, but a life—the very mystery of his spirit, too subtle for analysis, too strong for repression, too divine to be tolerant of corruption.

John had passed through this experience. He had seen and heard the Christ and could testify from personal knowledge concerning the historicity of the facts upon which the Christian faith is founded. He had been also in the upper room on the day of Pentecost and had received the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling presence makes Jesus a personal experience in the lives of all those who believe. He could claim, therefore, the right to speak because he had been brought into spiritual fellowship with the

ascended Lord—he had an experimental knowledge of the *living* Christ.

This experimental knowledge of Christ brought John into a new and heavenly fellowship with Christ. A like experimental reception of Christ on the part of his readers, he declares, will bring them into the same fellowship. This fellowship is not an external association; it is not brought about by simply becoming a member of some society or church; it does not consist in external, organic form but in internal, spiritual correspondence. Souls are made one in Christ and not one in the bonds of ecclesiastical union. It is a kingdom of spiritual affinities. Time and sense cannot affect this fellowship. Distance cannot separate similar souls, while physical juxtaposition is powerless to bring dissimilar souls together. There are people who live in close personal contact—dwell under the same roof, board at the same place, work in the same shop—between whose minds there is scarcely a point of contact, whose souls are as far asunder as the poles, while, contrariwise, there are those separated by oceans and continents, aye, by the mysterious gulf that divides time from eternity, between whom there is a delightful fellowship. It is the fellowship of kindred spirits that John is talking about. This is the fellowship of the kingdom of God.

Though sundered far by faith they meet
Around one common mercy seat.

We are not now thinking of the nature of the change that takes place in the individual in the

divine work of regeneration. Suffice it to say that regeneration is the implantation of a new life, the life of Christ in the soul. But we are thinking of the fact of that transaction and its effect upon consciousness. We are thinking of the Christ of experience. It is a psychological fact that sensation must precede perception, memory, and thought; or, to put it more definitely, it must precede mental activity. Whenever mental activity is sufficiently strong and persistent to produce a change in one's way of life, it marks a point in consciousness that memory cannot get away from. Such a point is an experience. These experiences are the definitely marked places on the pathway of the past where crises in the life have taken place in the progress of the soul's growth and development.

Conversion is such an experience. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit a new life, the divine life, is implanted. Under the stimulus of this new sensation the soul becomes conscious of the existence of a higher universe than that in which it has heretofore been living. Christ is made real as Saviour and Lord. Perceiving the relation between Christ and the eternal interests of the soul and becoming aware of the guilty distance at which he stands from God because of transgression, the one having this experience turns away from sin, surrenders to Christ for salvation and begins to live a new life. This surrender, coming as the climax to a struggle against evil and as the result of the acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord, produces

an experience so definite and distinct that one cannot pass through it without knowing it. In fact, one does know it. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Such an experience is an end of argument. There is no process of metaphysical reasoning by which the person who has had this experience can be convinced of the contrary. It is a matter of fact as real to him as a burn or a broken limb or any conscious state, and therefore it cannot be denied. Hence, a man who is a Christian may not be able to say, "I know that I am saved," but if he has passed through the experience of conversion he can say, "I know that I have experienced a change in my life." The former statement is based upon an intelligent appropriation of God's Word; the latter is based upon a personal experience. The first is a matter of faith's appropriation of the Scriptures; the second a matter of consciousness. Every follower of Christ in some degree experiences a change which marks a turning point in his life. He may not be able to describe it, he may not always be able to locate the exact point at which the crisis came, but he will always know that something happened to him that made him over. This is the experimental fact that lies at the basis of Christian fellowship. The Christ of history becomes the Christ of personal experience.

V

“And these things write we unto you,” says John, “that your joy may be full.” The believer’s supreme joy is secured by testifying to others of his personal experience of life in Christ. There is a gracious restraint on all who have this experimental knowledge of Christ to impart it to others. To know that we have fellowship with Christ and through that fellowship a kindred relation to God the Father is indeed a source of joy; but the fulness of this joy is reached when we have led another into the heavenly fellowship through our testimony. The supreme joy of Jesus was in leading men and women into the experience of the heavenly life. It was his “meat to eat” that his disciples knew not of. So is it with the soul touched by the heavenly life. The joy of leading a soul to Christ is so exalted, so soul-thrilling, so spirit-filling, that no one can experience it once without longing to become a constant evangel of the new-found life. To bring others into touch with Christ is the supreme joy of the Christian.

As Samuel Rutherford says:

Oh! if some soul from Anworth
Meet me at God’s right hand,
My heaven will be two heavens
In Immanuel’s land.

III

THE COMING KINGDOM

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as
it is in heaven.—MATTHEW 6:10

In a majestic passage in *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes the creation of the heavens above and the earth beneath. In lines that are especially fine and thrilling he pictures the Son of God going out upon his creative mission, riding with his shining train of angels far out into the midst of chaos where the abyss was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand
He took the golden compasses, prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This Universe and all created things.
One foot he centred, and the other turned
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, "Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds;
This be thy just circumference, O World!"

In the vivid imagination of Milton we see Christ standing on the summit of the newly formed cosmos, and sending the planets one by one spinning into the void immense, constant in their revolutions and mysterious in their harmonies. And whether we look on the shining circumference here or there, or there or yonder, we behold Christ enthroned, the eternal Son of God.

This picture that Milton draws of the enthroned Christ makes one think of Paul's statement con-

cerning Christ in Ephesians: "God . . . raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in the world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

In this matchless picture drawn by Paul many worlds in the universe of redemption are unrolled before our eyes; but without Christ they are all without form and void, with darkness upon the face of the deep. But in the ordered spiritual cosmos, brooded over by the Spirit of God, there is one center around which they revolve; one figure in which they find meaning; one personality to whom they yield their mastery. That person is Christ.

This peerless person, enthroned in the universe by the imperial decree of Almighty God, shall reign over all the earth. The ideals of the gospel will be reached only when Christ has been enshrined as Saviour and Lord in the hearts of men and made pre-eminent in the arts and sciences, literature and life, culture and civilization, government and social order of the whole world. The kingdom of God—God reigning in individuals and through individuals over things—is to be put on the inside of the municipal, civic, social, and national life of the world. That is the end to which God's purpose looks; it is the world's supreme need.

I

The kingdom of God is the golden thread running through all the Scriptures. It emerges in Exodus 19:6, when God said to his Chosen People, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." It appears constantly throughout the Old Testament as the objective and hope of Israel. In fact, the Pentateuch looks to no other consummation, the Psalms sound no other note, and the major and minor prophets see no other vision. John, the forerunner of Christ, with prophetic voice broke the silence between the Old and New Testaments with the message, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And Jesus himself, the divine teacher, made the coming of the kingdom a constant imperative by placing it in the heart of the disciples' prayer as one of the chief petitions of his people.

The kingdom of God seats itself in the heart of the believer. The kingdom is within you, says Christ, and Paul tells us that it is righteousness, peace, and joy. This is something different from the reign of natural law. It is something more, if not other, than the moral order which prevails in the universe. We cannot choose to be in or out of the moral realm. We are born in and for a moral order which is of God. But there is a rule of God which is apart from and more than the reign of God in either the natural or the moral order; it is the personal relation the believer has with God in Christ. The kingdom which Christ taught us to seek as our supreme good and to pray for as the world's supreme

need is God's rule in those who accept Christ and through them his rule over things in the world. The mighty God who made and rules the earth, the Holy God who inhabits eternity, the great Judge of all the earth who does right, comes into the life of the believer and sets up his kingdom. When this relation is established there can be no question about the seat of God's kingdom and the method of God's rule in the world.

This personal relationship is established through Christ. He is the kingdom personified. He is the revelation of God and also the revelation of the kingdom of God. He reveals the character of God and also the character of God's reign. God redeems in terms of Christ and rules in terms of Christ. Christ has been made head over all things by the Father. This is why Christ has so much to do with the coming of the kingdom of God in the world. It is not simply that he knows more about the kingdom, which he does, but the kingdom comes with him. He is "the way, the truth, and the life."

The kingdom of God, God reigning in individuals and through individuals over things, is the loftiest, the biggest idea that ever engaged the mind of man. It is larger than any and all world kingdoms. It is larger than the church which is one of its agents. It covers all areas of human activity, applies to all phases of human culture, and encompasses all horizons of human life. It expresses the will of God for the control of all human conduct. It is not an organization, but a spirit which is to infuse and

direct all human relations. It is universal and continuously contemporaneous. It is fundamentally social, for there is a king with subjects, a father with a family, a realm and a rule where love is the law. And what is the gospel? In Jesus' own words it is the good news of the kingdom. "Jesus went about all Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom."

II

The kingdom in God's purpose and plan dates back to the beginning. It would seem from the record in Genesis that God created man and commissioned him to rule in the earth. It was God's world, not man's. Man was therefore to bring all the forces and powers and resources of the physical world under the control of moral, spiritual, and righteous intelligence; he was to give expression to the abstract terms of love, mercy, justice, and holiness in the institutions, laws, and life of human civilization; he was to establish in the earth the kingdom of God. There seems to be no intelligent explanation for the creation of the earth and man unless there is ultimately to come out of it all a world in which righteousness prevails. Throughout all the Old Testament Scriptures God is moving towards the establishment of a kingdom in the earth. This was his purpose in creation; it is his purpose in grace. The redemptive idea is therefore fundamental; it is the central truth of the Scriptures. Hence, in the meaning of creation itself, man, as created, is not the ultimate purpose of God, but

man as redeemed and glorified. The natural world is not the fulfilment of the divine plan, but a renewed and reconstructed world (Revelation 20:1). God's purpose in creation becomes luminous and magnificent when viewed in the light of his kingdom purpose.

The church is not the kingdom, it is only the agent of the kingdom. Christ says, "I will build my church," but the kingdom is offered to men; they are to "see," to "accept," to "enter," to "inherit," to "proclaim," the kingdom. We do not build a force, we relate ourselves to it. We obey the laws by which it works and then its powers work for us. So with the kingdom of God, we do not build it, we accept it; we relate ourselves to it and receive its benefits. We build churches. They are the means to the realization of the kingdom. Churches are relative; the kingdom is absolute. The churches are timeful; the kingdom is timeless. The kingdom is over all. It demands of the churches surrender, obedience, and conformity to the will of Christ; so does it confront all the life of the world—the race, the state, the family, the social order—with the same imperious demands: repent, believe, obey, and be saved.

The kingdom of God is the way of life for the world. It is God's eternal plan for man's individual and collective living. It does not set up a moral code to be obeyed, its laws are written on the heart. It is part of the constitution of the universe. It is built into the foundation of the world. It is different

in nature to the kingdoms of this world. It is spiritual. It is a present and eternal fact. It became an established reality in the coming of Christ. It was made a continuous power when the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost. It will become a glorious consummation when Christ returns in great power and glory. It has come, it is coming, it is to come. It is now in conflict with the ways of a sinful world that crucified its King. Its ultimate triumph is yet to come. The reign of Christ now seats itself in the hearts and lives of believers and not on a throne of worldly power.

Ultimately Christ shall reign over the material world, but that will be when the kingdoms of this earth which are material and will remain material are destroyed. Daniel, in speaking of the kingdoms of this world in relation to the kingdom of God, says: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44). If we are in doubt about the interpretation of this passage, turn to the seventh chapter where Daniel says, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, . . . and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, . . . And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an ever-

lasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:9-14).

Daniel is speaking of the consummation. We are now living in the time of preparation. The kingdom is now seated in the hearts and lives of the disciples of Christ. Our task now is the making and baptizing of disciples in preparation for the consummation of the kingdom. It is useless to talk of a kingdom for Christ until we have a constituency prepared for that kingdom—men and women who have individually acknowledged Christ as King. But the kingdom is here now in the hearts and lives of those who have surrendered to Christ, and while the kingdom is in conflict with the world, they are under the necessity of discovering the best available means of checking human sinfulness, and of increasing the possibilities and opportunities of love within a sinful world.

When the Lord said "the field is the world," he was talking about human conditions as well as geographical territory. The Christian religion through the lives of believers is to be put in the field of human conditions as leaven is put in meal with the purpose of changing earthly conditions and creating a Christlike world. Paul tells us that our "warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." These wicked spirits, the forces of evil that dominate in the field of human affairs, are to be opposed by Christians who through their

godly living are to enthrone Christ in human affairs. Hence, the kingdom of God has to do with every phase of human life. It relates itself to marriage, to the family, the home, education, physical welfare, the development of the natural resources of the earth, the transaction of business, the accumulation and use of property, to industrial problems, to man's social and political affairs, to the state, to laws, to manners, to customs, to amusements, to literature, to art—in a word, to all forms and aspects of the life of man. While the kingdom is in preparation there is the conquest of human affairs as well as the conquest of human hearts.

III

This is a task of tremendous and far-reaching proportions. It means vastly more than the occupation of geographical areas by Christian forces. It is the permeation of the life of the world by Christian ideals. The disciples of Christ are to project the teachings of Christ into every field where they come in contact with the modern world order. They are to make Christ regnant in everything they touch so that he will reign in all and over all that they control clear out to the rim of the circumference of their influence.

The disciples of Christ are to work to bring the forces that make for culture under the control of the forces that make for character. Man never knew as much as he knows today. The libraries of the world are groaning with the lore of the past. Sci-

entific discoveries, the deeper insight into nature and her operations, the great achievements of applied science and the wonderful advancement in mechanical knowledge have added infinitely to the world's information. Man knows more today in every field than he ever knew in any period of world history, but the sources of this knowledge and the means of its distribution are largely in the hands of the principalities and powers against which we fight in bringing in the kingdom of God.

So long as this condition exists the kingdom will be retarded. What people read in their papers and in their magazines, and study in their schools and colleges will determine their beliefs. A godless educational system means ultimately a godless nation. If knowledge is used without fear of God or regard for man, it releases forces that will destroy the very civilization it creates. Jesus should be enthroned in the intellectual and cultural life of the world. Christianity must win in the field of thought. Christ should be enthroned in the culture of the world, and the people of the world should be made to understand that the Christian religion does not conflict with any truth anywhere. Our men of culture, education, training, learning, and intellectual power must enter the field of Christian polemics and show to this modern age that the religion of Christ in its teaching coincides with verified truth in every field.

Christians should also work to bring the forces that make for wealth, progress, and prosperity under the control of the forces that make for the coming

of the kingdom of God. Christ must be enthroned in the industry of the world if we would establish a Christlike social order. The inventive genius of man has produced a machine age which is transforming our habits of living. The industrial system created by applied science constitutes a chief source of national prosperity, but it has also produced some of our greatest social problems. As a result of the industrial system produced by this machine civilization the world has been greatly enriched, but it has not been made righteous. The vast national resources of the earth are being used to fill the coffers of men greedy for material power. In a world flooded with plenty, women and children are dying with hunger. Throughout the world there are social injustice, abject poverty, woeful ignorance, misery, suffering and shame from the lack of the necessities of life while the wealth and material resources of the world are being squandered in riotous living by thoughtless and selfish people. This ought not to be. Christians must teach the world, by their use of wealth and by their influence in the current affairs of life, the right use of material things.

Nor should the disciples of Christ overlook the forces that make for and multiply human power in the field of the industrial arts. These should be made to serve in the coming of the kingdom of brotherhood among men. We should win for Christ in the field of material power. Never before in the history of the world has man possessed so much power as he possesses today. For six thousand years

mankind depended principally upon animal energy. During this time very little change was effected in the rate of doing things. Then Watt discovered steam, and the steam engine followed. Then came electricity and the electric engine, and then the combustion engine. These discoveries and inventions have created an economic revolution. In the last hundred years man has multiplied the energy resources at his command nine million times. This has given a social, economic, and moral problem of tremendous significance—a problem that has in it a threatening menace to the very existence of the present structure of society.

We cannot go on on the old order. Men who are selfish and grasping, using the machinery, wealth, and power of this present age, and controlled only by the profit motive, will produce a social order in which there are a few immensely wealthy men in the upper strata of the social order and the great mass of humanity completely pauperized in the lower strata. One of the big problems Christians face today is the reorganization and reconstruction of the economic system of the world on the basis of the Golden Rule. Never have we needed the gospel more than we need it now. Never have we needed to recognize the brotherhood of man as now. We must enthrone Christ in the industry of the world and readjust our economic order according to the principles he taught if we would save civilization.

In addition to these material forces, there are spiritual forces working to shape and mold our social

life, these should be brought under the sovereignty of Christ. There are many problems confronting us today in our social order. Dr. George W. Coe classes these problems in three groups: (1) social—clash of races; (2) economic—the clash of interests; and (3) environmental—the clash of opportunity.

These social problems can all be solved if Christ is enthroned in the life of the world. There are five great kingdom principles taught by Christ, which, if made dominant in the thinking of our people and put into practice, will transform the world and make the social order Christlike. These principles are: (1) love as the motive of conduct; (2) absolute honesty; (3) absolute truthfulness; (4) absolute virtue; and (5) absolute unselfishness. Christians should strive so to reveal these principles of the kingdom in their own lives as to make them dominant in the life of the world.

As Christians, we believe that the kingdom of God is the only solution for our problems. We well know that if the world is saved no half-way measures will suffice, no palliatives will do. Only the Great Physician can heal the hurt of the world and restore its health. The teaching of Christ must be threaded into the thought and life of the world so that the social order established will embody the principles of righteousness. This means that Christian principles must become the individual virtues of the men and women who live in the world. No country can be better than its citizens, and if Christianity is to become effective in changing national

life, then it must root itself in the lives of the men and women who compose that life. To embody these principles in law is not enough, for the laws may not be obeyed. It is not legal rights, but moral rights that must be established. The main trouble with the world now is sin and selfishness, and sin and selfishness root in individual life.

The coming of the kingdom is not a single, a detached incident; it is the marshaling of all divine events, the accomplishment of all Christian labors, the completion of all believers' hopes. The kingdom of God completes Christ's redemptive work; it completes the divine purpose in the creation of the world. All things exist for the kingdom. All divine energies make for the coming of the kingdom. All things are fulfilled in the consummation of the kingdom. Hence, it is not denying one thing, it is denying and making futile all things, to say there is to be no kingdom. The soul of the believer abhors this unbelief as utter blindness and flings itself with new desire on the prayer, "Thy kingdom come."

IV

THE SCOPE OF CHRISTIANITY

I have seen an end of all perfections: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.—PSALM 119:96

All things for us begin with the simple, the small, the elementary. Take time: it begins for us with the present moment. When we were children we were hardly conscious of anything but the present moment, but we soon found that time stretched backward into the past and forward into eternity, that the present moment was but an insignificant part of the eternity of time. Space is the same way. At first it was the familiar horizon around us, but we soon found that there was ever more and more space; it went on and on; the familiar place where we lived was but a spot in a vast infinity. It is practically so with matter. The little bit of ground we stand on is a part of the earth, but the earth is part of a solar system which is only one of many systems, and so we come to learn that through distances beyond all power of definite conception, the realm of matter extends. It somehow dignifies us to feel that we belong to wholes so vast.

There is a like expansiveness in the field of human duty. For the little child duty means doing as others would have him do, or obedience. For the boy or girl in school, it means more. For the young business man or the young wife, it means still more. Every

fresh relationship in life enlarges the meaning of the word, "duty" and broadens the scope of its application. As a citizen there are certain duties beyond those of business. As a member of the brotherhood of man there are obligations beyond those of citizenship. As a member of the human family, there are duties to future generations as well as to the people now living. The city in which one lives, the nation to which one belongs, the racial group of which one is a member, the neighborhood closest to one's home, the man in distress on the side of the road that runs by one's door, all give birth to profound civic, social, and moral obligations.

The Christian life has a similar expansiveness. It begins with the simple act of faith, but this is only the beginning; the ultimate purpose is to reset, to remake, and to redirect the whole life both in time and in eternity. The Christian, living in a changing social order, an order growing more and more complex, moves in a field of ever-widening obligations and responsibilities. Because of this ever-changing environment the Christian life does not consist in any one specific thing, it does not pool itself in any definite round of immediate duties. It is an ever-enlarging, widening conception. To every single duty another may always be added. The fulness of the Christian life is always ahead of us as space is beyond us. If we are spiritually discerning we will sooner or later come to see that any special round of religious activities that we may settle down in has another round circling about it, just as there is sys-

tem on system of planetary bodies in the heavens. One's field of responsibility in the Christian life enlarges as his contacts are multiplied.

I

This conception of the compass of one's obligation to God has often laid hold of spiritually-minded men. It caught the attention of the psalmist many centuries ago. To him man's highest and first obligation was to God. God's commandments measured the scope of duty, and these commandments were exceeding broad.

The tendency in our modern world is to make Christianity too easy. Men do not give scope enough for the full exercise of faith. Many are disposed, whether they are conscious of it or not, to standardize Christianity by reducing Christian living to a sort of "collective bargaining" basis. They do what public opinion requires in its standards of morality and school themselves to believe that by so doing they are fulfilling their full duty to God. There is a subtle deception in such an assumption. (Individual righteousness is not a matter of mass production.) The public, judging by its standards, may not condemn the individual for his way of living nor find fault with him for what he does, but that does not meet the issue, for the one who rests in the false security of worldly judgment falls into the tragic danger of being satisfied with an incompleted life. Such an one, judging his life by the narrow horizon of public opinion, would come to have a sense of

finality about himself. He might not say that he was perfect, but practically he would feel so; that is, he would have no feeling of imperfection. His very goodness, such as it is, would constitute a barrier to further progress.

The scope of Christianity is very limited when thus interpreted. It is narrowed down to what will satisfy public opinion. Public opinion at best demands as few external adjustments as possible. It demands little, if any, variation from the world life, and there is little, if any, sacrifice. The world life is cast on the plane of the least resistance. It is not too good lest it attract attention; it is not too bad lest it merit criticism. It is at best only a human measure of behavior.

Christianity, however, is not a method of behavior, but a type of life. If Christianity were a method of behavior, then to become a Christian one would only have to do what was right in the eyes of men. As it is, one must repent of his sins, cease his rebellion against God, accept Christ as Saviour and Lord, and experience the change wrought by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. This complete capitulation of the will of God is not an easy matter for the proud, self-contained human spirit. Man wants a way of salvation that magnifies his independence and gives room for the exercise of his self-determining abilities. But God's way of saving men smashes man's independence and leaves him at the foot of the Cross a broken and helpless suppliant. Christianity is a divine religion. Salvation is something

done in a man before it is something done for him. The whole life is made over. One becomes a new creature in Christ—he has a new character, a new citizenship, a new family, a new set of desires, a new love, a new life in Christ, and a new destiny.

Goodness must root in obedience to God. Jesus describes the difference between those who had a solid basis for their good actions and those who had not in the parable of the two builders. The two houses, so far as we know, were of the same sort of construction, and the circumstances were the same, but there was a different result. One house stood because it was built on a rock, the other house fell because it was built on sand. The difference might never have been revealed but for the strong trial, yet it was there all the while. One house, one fair life, grounded in obedience to truth, was an expression of character; the other, equally fair, no doubt, to all outward beholding, was but a happy accident—and an accident could lay it low.

The difference in these two builders was spiritual. The fact that the man who builded on the sand did nothing wrong yesterday or last year counts for little or nothing; the fact that life might have run smoothly for him another year counts for little or nothing. The thing that counts is that what he rested in was but an uncertain prop, a poor, partial, surface, human thing. The life that stands the test of time and eternity must be rooted in the unseen spiritual realm, it must be motivated by the hidden and unseen forces of Christ's love shed abroad in the

heart. It goes vastly further than meeting world standards of right and wrong. The man who pays his debts, takes care of his family, deals justly with his fellows, and lives a respectable life is only doing his duty; but doing one's duty in this limited way does not meet the constantly enlarging requirements of the Christian life. The field of Christian living is as wide and broad as the extent of suffering humanity's need, and, after all duties are met, there are ever-enlarging fields of opportunity, privilege, and service. God's commandments are exceeding broad.

II

The man on the street is not the only one who has a limited conception of Christianity. There are those among Christians who feel the insufficiency of merely outward standards of morality, who pray for a clean heart and a right spirit, but who after all make Christianity a private matter. They are kind to everyone they meet, but their idea of social duties does not go beyond this. They think of politics and business and questions of popular right and social justice as outside affairs with which they, as Christians, need not concern themselves. They say that Christianity is a spiritual religion, that it is to help one in his daily life and in his inward struggles. They view all spheres of life as secular and think that topics connected with secular things are hardly in place in a religious meeting. They may acquire a sort of negative saintliness, but what a limited view of God's requirements they have! Even the

ancient pagans had a better idea of social obligations. They looked upon duty, obedience to the law, co-operation with others for public end, willingness to sacrifice oneself for the common good as necessary to good citizenship. A good man and a poor citizen were contradictory terms. To be virtuous a man had to be courageous in battle, sacrificial in his service for his country, and upright in his private life. Surely the Christian cannot be less than this.

The Christian religion is not responsible for the contracted notion held by so many of its professed followers. In the development of Christian history certain teachers came to hold the idea that the reign of justice, the kingdom of heaven which Jesus announced, was not to be expected in this world. That kingdom was for another age, another dispensation, and the main thing for Christians in this life was to prepare for the kingdom hereafter. As a result, Christians became indifferent to everything outside the development of their own religious life. Saving one's own soul became the chief concern. We find the extreme of this attitude in those who took to the desert or to the mountains—whose aim was not to evangelize the world nor to promote a heavenly order among men, but by a life of self-denial to save their own souls for the hereafter.

It is a lingering remnant of this mode of thought that causes Christian people today to separate spiritual duties from social duties. Some Christians seem to think that we can attain Christian perfection without the social implications, and, conversely,

that we can obtain social perfection without Christianity. Neither is possible without the other. Even those who do not make the saving of their souls their chief and only concern think that there is a spirituality about struggle with their own selves that there is not about struggle for justice in society. They feel the divine Spirit within, but are unable to see God in history. They do not look for God in the great social movements of the world nor do they think of the kingdom of God as advancing with every incorporation of greater reach and equity in law, with every humiliation of proud and grasping men, with every lifting up of the downtrodden and the poor. They do not see that the just, the equal, the right in social life are in line with the divine will and that righteousness associated with any cause makes it sacred and spiritual. Their eyes seem to be blind to these things. They stop short of the full sweep of the divine commandments.

Christianity in its original spirit is against this narrow interpretation. Jesus announced the coming of a divine society. The principles he proclaimed implied, and would create if carried out, a practical living brotherhood among men. He never conceived of men as only saving their souls. He knew that to give oneself up in loving service was the way to greatness in the kingdom of heaven. He set his followers to the task of building a new world wherein old-time selfishness and wrong were thrown overboard and love reigned. Those who labor and pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is done

in heaven are working in his spirit. Those who, while they are preparing for another world, tell us that this world ought to be righteous, are his real followers. All the more, if we believe that things will be right hereafter, are we bound to try to see them right here. Hence, the call for new laws, for new institutions, for new usages of every kind.

We all believe that the primary Christian task is to make and baptize disciples. Christ came into the world to save sinners, to renew individual hearts, to change the direction of individual lives. We cannot bring the kingdom of God in without first creating a Christian constituency. If Christ is to reign among men, he must first reign in men and over men. The preaching of the gospel to every creature is the primary obligation of Christians. But while Christ's reign seats itself in the hearts of individuals, at the same time the results and effects of his reign will be evidenced by the creation of righteous conditions in the world. Men are not saved in a vacuum. They are saved as persons and are influenced by the environment in which they live. They work in offices or factories, they read newspapers and magazines, they attend movies, they live in towns and cities with other races and groups. While it is true that we cannot have a new world without new persons, it is hardly less true to say that it is easier to make a new person if we have a new world.

When God wanted to make a new person out of Abram, almost the first thing he did was to take Abram to a new land, away from the seductive in-

fluences of the corrupt and idolatrous city life in Ur. When God wanted to make the children of Israel a chosen nation, the recipients of his revelation for the world, he first took them out of Egypt into the Promised Land. The souls of individual Hebrews might have been saved in the land of the Pharaohs, but God felt the need of a new land to build better men. In fact, Moses almost failed in his mission of deliverance because of the unfavorable environment in Egypt. "Say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: . . . and I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord." Wasn't that gloriously good news? How eagerly the Hebrews must have responded! But ponder the next verse. "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage" (Exodus 6:6-9).

For a modern illustration of that text, try to preach the gospel of a Father-God in a migrant workers camp. "They hearken not for anguish of spirit and cruel bondage." Try to preach the gospel to a group of unemployed. "They hearken not for anguish of spirit." The poor, the unemployed, the tenant farmer, the dispossessed, the underprivileged

are not found in our churches, because their ears have been dulled by the hardness of their daily lives. If we want to produce more Christians, and better Christians, we must be concerned for the social order in which men live. Joel proclaimed a better day in economic life, and then he said that better day would be followed by a spiritual revival. And a study of revivals will verify his insight.

III

There are other well-meaning Christians who fall into the opposite error. They have a deep sense of their social obligations and are ardent and devoted in marking out the new paths which the feet of men should tread, but in their zeal they are in danger of forgetting the necessity, the absolute indispensability of individual righteousness. One of the unhappy results of the separation between religion and secular life in the thought of Christians is that those who are the most earnest in their contention for the principles on which Christian character is founded are often indifferent to social reform, while those who are eager for social reform are apt to place too slight an emphasis on individual Christian character. The latter are apt to say, "You see what mere personal faith amounts to. Look at the world today after nineteen hundred years of individualism in religion. What we need is to change the social system, to make the environment of men right, and morals will then take care of themselves." They do not see that the characters of men are causes as

well as effects—yes, causes in a far deeper sense than they are effects. They do not see that a man may be in the most favorable circumstances and yet not be any better man; that the inner life of the individual, as well as the laws and institutions under which he lives, must be changed.

Take any of the schemes of social justice and, if realized, they would only give the opportunity for better living. But the individual would have to avail himself of these opportunities. There are those who do not use the opportunities they now have—who are lazy, shiftless, thinking only of today and how to get through it most easily. Changing economic conditions would not help these shiftless ones. You would have to change them. Suppose also that capital keeps the mind, which so much of it has now, to squeeze the public whenever it gets a chance. Would changing the economic order change the disposition of capitalists? Hardly, for land and capital are but opportunities for service under any order; the nature of the service always depends on the character of the men.

So with every step in the reformation of the social order. If we do not have righteous, public spirited men and the old-fashioned virtues of steady and faithful industry—men who think more of the work than of the reward for it—each attempted reform will bring but an indifferent success. We might get society organized on an equitable basis, have work and maintenance assured to every man, but if the co-operative spirit is not in men's hearts, if they do

not give loyal service, if they are unwilling to submit to necessary restraint; unless, in brief, they acquire a greatness of soul matching the greatness of the ideas incorporated in their social system, the system will fail. The commandment that will be co-extensive with the march of the future is exceeding broad, and those who think that any new form of industrial life or finalities will bring perfection of themselves will be disillusioned. Justice without just men is a thing in the air; brotherhood is a dream until we have those who in their hearts love others as they love themselves.

Herbert Spencer said, "You cannot build a golden society out of men with leaden instincts." Jesus taught and practiced that eighteen hundred years before Spencer was born. Surely all of us believe that the primary responsibility of the church is to produce Christians. The right way to improve the social order is through the preaching of the gospel that the hearts of sinful men may be changed and true character developed, rather than by any direct effort to transform the environment in which we live. At the heart of any new world there must stand the new person. Upon no other foundation can a better world be constructed. The primary task of the church and of its leaders is to produce more and better Christians. But let us not forget that the production of better Christians is inextricably interwoven with the production of better communities, better nations, and a better world.

IV

We really live in an infinite universe and are under an infinite law. It is not easy to find a stopping place. Of this and that duty which seems the end, we may say as Epictetus said of the inn, which travelers came up to on their journey—not to it, but through it. We are all on a journey. Life is a journey. The universe, as Whitman said, is a road for traveling souls. To sit down and imagine we have reached perfection is to get out of touch with the sweep and urge of divine forces in the world. To think it is enough to be a respectable member of society, to live a pure, private life, to dwell on any one virtue or excellence and be forgetful of others, is a sad, and, when we think of the possible scope of men's lives, a dreary mistake.

There are those who slight the virtues of the intellect, who think that goodness can atone for narrowness and prejudice. But no one thing can make up for the lack of another. As no single atom can be spared from the universe without disturbing the balance of the whole, so there is no type of virtue and no form of good but goes to make up the balance and the beauty of the moral world; there is none without which that world is not incomplete. Oh, to give up our placidity and contentment! Oh, to feel that we are not at the end but only at the beginning! Oh, to get a sense of the large calling of man and the large destiny of the race; to have a sense of the "increasing purpose" that through the ages runs; to be willing to participate in that divine

plan by which the "thoughts of men are widened with the process of the sun!"

The soul of man demands large thought to live by. Suppose you have been shut up for days beneath the roof of your house. What liberation there is in once more standing under the ample dome of heaven! Or suppose you have only glimpses of the blue through the walls of city streets. What relief, what joy to stand in the country fields under the whole broad expanse—to feel oneself the citizen of a universe to which the eye can see no bounds! 'Tis so with the good, the vision of a redeemed soul.

The goodness of many people is tiring. We are constrained to say, "So much possible and is this all?" No unrest, no perturbation, no divine dissatisfaction, no reaching out after a good they do not see? It is a relief to turn from such to the great souls of the past, to those who were great because they had a sense of greatness above and beyond them; to the psalmist, the prophets, to Jesus who said there is only One who is good; to Paul with his sense of things unattained, straining his eyes to a divine consummation still far away; to all those now who are struggling and striving although with but indifferent success to make themselves better and to lead the world onward. These are they who bring home to us the meaning of those ancient words of the psalmist, "I have seen an end of all perfection, for thy commandment is exceedingly broad."

V

THE WAY TO THE HIGHEST

Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister.—MATTHEW 20:26 (ASV)

Men have never ceased to ask the question, "Who among us is the greatest?" We ask it as we read the pages of history, where are recorded the names of the leaders of human life and thought. We ask it in our business and social relations as we watch men struggling for wealth, place, and power. We ask it in our homes as we hold up before our children some ideal of greatness toward which they may strive as they grow into manhood or womanhood.

Jesus of Nazareth is the only one to whom we can go with assurance for a correct answer to this perplexing question. He lived, it is true, in a world very different from our own, but he faced the same major problems of life that we face. Human nature has not changed. Men were then, as they are now, seeking for place, position, and power. The whole scope of the teaching and example of Jesus from the beginning went to show that true greatness, the greatness that is actually great, is a different thing from that which is accounted greatness among men. "Ye know," says Jesus, "that the princes of the Gentiles exercised dominion over them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whoso-

ever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Here is a new answer to an old question. Christ has done with this question what he does with every problem coming to him; he has lifted it up to a grand level and made it minister to a fuller revelation of the higher life.

I

Jesus does not condemn the two disciples for desiring the places of honor. He is a wise and gentle teacher, and, while he would not encourage in the slightest way a selfish ambition that might spoil a soul in the making, at the same time he would not discourage an aspiration that fronted any one of his disciples toward the higher altitudes of usefulness in his kingdom. He would not break the bruised reed of anyone's affection nor quench the smoking flax of his self-denying consecration. He does not, therefore, refuse their request; he only reminds them that the honors of the kingdom of heaven are for those who prove themselves worthy in the sight of him who seeth all and who rewards every man according to his deeds.

Rightly directed aspiration and ambition are incentives to noble endeavor. What poor success the teacher would have if his pupils had no higher aspiration than to remain at the foot of the class. Lofty and worth-while achievements were never attained by men whose only ambition was to walk in the ranks of the commonplace. All the works of art, the books that live, the poems that will be read

when ancient conquerors are forgotten, the discoveries of science, the inventions that have revolutionized human society, and the institutions that minister to the needs of men are products of man's upreaching aspirations.

There is, however, a type of ambition that is harmful. An ambition that is personal and selfish, that seeks place and power for personal profit, that sort of ambition is always wrong. It produces discontent, animosities, jealousies, hatred, and injustice. Human history is replete with the story of the havoc wrought by the selfish ambition of godless men. Selfishness creates civil dissension in community and state, and is responsible for most of the wars that have blighted the world with devastation and death.

It was against this self-seeking spirit that Jesus uttered his revolutionary words. He was declaring truceless, unceasing, uncompromising opposition to the selfish use of place, position, and power. His teaching, put into practice, would make of the privileged class in our social and economic order servants of all the people. It would establish a new way of living among men. Always and everywhere Christianity is unselfish. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." This spirit of Christ is foreign to the spirit of the world. The motive and mission of Christianity is self-giving; the motive and mission of the world is self-getting. At the very threshold of his kingdom, Jesus meets every man with the

declaration: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

There are those who are calling attention to the demoralizing effects of social injustice, which they tell us is creating an under-privileged class in our social order that may become a menace to civilization. There is no doubt about the evil effects of social injustice, but if the witness of history is of any value, the danger to civilization is not so much from the downtrodden, the peasant and the serf, as from those who hold positions of power and trust. Ambitious men in official positions who use their power to sustain themselves in office are responsible for most of the wrongs that have cursed mankind. This selfish use of place and power to perpetuate an unjust status quo has blasted and withered the beauty of community and national life, loosed the dogs of social and economic injustice with their devastation, and made crimson the earth with the blood of the slaughtered in fratricidal strife. Selfish ambition is always wrong, and always leads to disaster. Christ's way of living is different.

II

Christ's idea of greatness is in sharpest contrast to the ideas held by men of the world. In the kingdoms of this world, the great ones lord it over others; in Christ's way of living the great ones serve.

What a revolution is involved in this simple contrast! Here is the seed-truth for the planting of a harvest of great social changes—the dignity of labor, the royalty of service, the majesty of self-sacrificing love; the utter condemnation of the miserable maxim, “Every man for himself”; the world’s first question, What shall we have? made the last, and its last question, What shall we give? made the first. Such are some of the fruits which have grown from the seed our Lord planted in an uncongenial soil that day.

We cannot say that we are ignorant of what ought to be. Through the mouth of the prophets who have come from time to time to brighten up the leaden skies of human history with their vibrant spirituality, God has given man definite and precise revelations of love, brotherhood, and service. These prophets of God have proclaimed the necessity of higher ideals and the rejection of the primacy of earthly claims. They have condemned envy, which leads to crime; pride, which is the generator of hatred and stupidity; vanity, that ugly trap in which many of the greatest and strongest are caught.

What have we done and what are we doing with these divine instructions? When we look at the nations and their way of living, what we see is entirely different to what we would see if the teaching were lived without concessions to or compromise with the false gods of Mammon, Mars, and Moloch. Men, and indeed whole nations, live today with the

sole ambition of maintaining themselves in positions of superiority of predominance over others. The dog-in-the-manger attitude is the accepted code of international law. People of one nationality and race are taught to hate, despise, and condemn all other races and nationalities. They are willing and even eager to fight, to shed blood, at the slightest mention that "the earth is the Lord's," and that all God's children are entitled to a share in the things he has provided.

There is only one way to halt the stride into the abyss of chaos and sordid misery which lies at the bottom of the path mankind is traveling today. God's teaching must be heeded. We must break, first, individually and then nationally, with an order that is pagan in principle and practice. We must go back to the simple precepts of Christianity. We must accept Christ's standard of greatness.

III

To be a servant of all is the highest honor one can have. The noblest thing one can do is to dedicate unselfishly, and to use sacrificially in Christ's service the position and power which he possesses. All men are not equally privileged. Some have high positions, some have no position, but everyone, high or low, possesses power in some degree, and that power is an obligation to serve. Paul says, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and the unwise." And so is everyone. If we have a single talent or gift or power or

opportunity, to that degree we are in debt to our fellows and to our God. No matter what sort of power it is, it owes. Financial power, social power, intellectual power, spiritual power—all are under obligation to serve; all power of whatever sort is debtor to others.

This is the way to greatness. It is not talents that make one great, however many and brilliant they may be; it is not knowledge that gives the highest enrichment to the mind and life; it is not great wealth that secures the most lasting places and the greatest honors among men. In none of these things does true greatness reside. True greatness is found in the use of one's powers, one's position, one's possessions in the service of God and man. The history of all real progress—financial, social, intellectual, moral, and religious—is the story of the toil, sacrifice, and suffering of men who have served. Within ten years after Livingstone's death, Africa had made more progress than in the ten centuries before. This, as all the world now knows, was because Livingstone gave all his energies to the destruction of the slave trade. Wearied and afflicted, he toiled on to the last, until he fell in an African jungle to rise no more; yet with his dying hand he wrote this message to the world: "All I can add in my solitude is, may Heaven's rich blessings come down on everyone who will help to heal this open sore of the world."

Christ teaches, in his matchless sacrifice for others, the fine art of living. It must be confessed, how-

ever, that few of us learn even the rudiments of this art. Too often we serve in the wrong spirit. We lose the reward by offering our cup of cold water in an attitude of superiority. We give to the poor grudgingly. We grumble and complain about the no-account people that have to be taken care of, or the ne'er-do-wells who would not know the door was open if we did not shove them through it. We spend much time that should be given to helping others trying to show that we ourselves are bearing the burden and heat of the day.

Of course, every group in our social order has its own problems and moral perils. Many are poor because they are lazy and shiftless. They need self-discipline, energy, and enterprise. But this does not excuse those of us who are in positions more fortunate. Our duty is clear. We are to use our privileges as a means of service. Whatever others may think or do, Christians must freely give their services without expecting either gratitude or personal profit from those they help. It is service for service's sake. A victor in the Olympic games was asked: "Spartan, what will you get by this victory?" He answered, "I shall have the honor to fight in the front ranks for my country." So with the Christian, the honor that comes from place and power in Christ's kingdom is the high opportunity for greater service.

IV

Christ would have his disciples know that official position in his kingdom is not a place of honor sim-

ply; it is an opportunity for service. The chief difficulty with the scribes and Pharisees was that they made a racket of their religion. They were professional position seekers. In their own estimation they were a specially privileged people in a class apart and superior to the masses. They thanked God that they were not as other men. But instead of serving the people as their position and attainments enabled them to do, they laid burdens on others which they would not themselves assume. Christ condemned them as hypocrites. Now, the facts are that these scribes and Pharisees whom Jesus condemned for their pride of position were the educated, the socially superior, the religious people of their day. They were the office holding group. They felt that service in the kingdom of God meant to have a position; hence, they sought the chief seats in the synagogue.

There are offices to fill, there are places of responsibility in the church, but what Christ wants is service. The deacon who sees only the routine duties of his office has missed the meaning of his position. The Sunday school teacher who knows only pedagogy and fails to have a heart response to the call of Christ to lead men and women to repentance and faith is leaving undone the weightier matters. The bane of Judaism was professionalism. It had lost its spiritual power. This may come to be our peril. When the leaders in church life become mere officials, when worship is reduced to ritual, and spiritual power gives place to programs and projects, then

will the church of Christ become weak and ineffective in the moral life of the world.

The church of Christ is set in the framework of a lost race. It has a redeeming and saving mission. The divine forces of our churches were organized and commissioned by Christ to do two things: to disciple the nations—make Christlike men and women, and to teach the disciplined to obey Christ—build the kingdom of God. The gospel of Christ will not have accomplished its ultimate purpose until this is done. Men and women who obey Christ can never cease their fight against wrongdoing so long as a single civic or social abuse remains; so long as there is an underprivileged or an overprivileged class; so long as social and economic injustice exists. Christ came to save individuals. This is first, fundamental, unchangeable. But saved individuals cannot live a saved life without trying to save society, to save the state, to save civilization, to save the world.

This is the way to serve. It is the way of sympathy, love, and helpfulness. Christ tells us to weep with them that weep and to rejoice with them that rejoice. We need this vital contact in order to serve. Sometimes we talk about the underprivileged and denounce the social injustice that creates an indigent class, but what do we know about the sufferings of the poor? Have we lived on bread and water? Have we shivered in unsealed shacks in winter and fought flies and mosquitoes in unscreened houses in summer? Have we watched our children

grow up in ignorance and squalor while we were unable to give either an education or decent living conditions? Have we toiled for a pittance through the day and at night watched our children go to bed crying for bread? Have we looked in despair at the setting sun and watched hopelessly through the nights of the lengthening years for the breaking of the dawn of happier and better days that never come? What do we know about the tenant farmer chained to the soil by circumstances over which he has no control? What do we know about the heart-aches of weeping mothers in the slums of our cities who watch their children turned into criminals by the rough hand of a cruel fate?

Service for God is doing something about the social and economic injustice that makes possible the existence of underprivileged classes. God is not served in cloistered isolation. Service involves mutuality among men, and that not alone with a select, congenial group, but among all men. When John sent his disciples to Jesus to inquire if he were the coming One or should they look for another, Jesus told them to look at what he was doing and tell John that the sick were healed, the blind received sight, the lame walked, and the poor had the gospel preached to them. This work for suffering humanity was the proof Christ gave for his Messiahship.

We are to prove the validity of our Christianity by helping to heal the hurt of suffering humanity. We cannot treat men less fortunate than ourselves like the scum of the earth and expect them to think

of us as the children of God. We cannot allow men to be consigned to a life of poverty and want by an unjust economic system without protesting against that system with all our souls and expect them to be drawn to our churches. Not to protest against social wrongs is to hamper and hinder the gospel we preach. In a play dealing with employment, entitled *Love on the Dole*, there is a strong scene of a young girl and boy who had made a Sunday excursion out of the slums to a hill in the country. It was the first time in her life that the girl had ever been on a mountain. She was deeply impressed by the strange beauty and wonder of the scene. She said to her companion: "It is marvelous. I think I could believe in God up here. But I can't back in Hanky Park." One of the great needs of Christianity is to get rid of the "Hanky Park."

v

Service is the patent to the only true nobility. God teaches us on every page of his revealed will to man that the men and women who have been and will be the regnant forces of the world are those who have rejoiced and will rejoice in the title of "servant." Abraham, the father of the faithful, is everywhere spoken of as God's servant. Moses, the giver of the divine law which through the ages has guided the world in its moral life, is everywhere described as a servant. So is it with David, the sweet singer of Israel. So is it with the prophet Elijah. So is it with the intrepid and faithful Daniel. So is it with

Peter, who described himself as "the servant of Jesus Christ." So is it with the incomparable Paul, who gloried in saying: "Whose I am and whom I serve." But passing by all these patriarchs, prophets, apostles, behold the Son of God himself, who stands in the midst of the sons of men with the amazing declaration, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

This is a new kind of living. It is the sort of living that proves its faith by its works. William Wilberforce breaking fetters on the floor of the British Parliament, Elizabeth Fry in her work of prison reform in England, Florence Nightingale in her work for the soldiers of the Crimean War, Lady Henry Somerset working among the people in the slums of London, Harland Page distributing tracts among the city workshops, Ralph Wells gathering a Sunday school class from among the garrets and attics, Lord Shaftesbury helping thieves and tramps, John Bunyan writing as he lay rotting in Bedford jail the *Pilgrim's Progress*, General Booth laboring with the underprivileged, and Dorcas, of New Testament fame, with her needle, were all preaching through unselfish service sermons eloquent and lasting.

That last sentence on the tomb of General (Chinese) Gordon, in St. Paul's Cathedral, holds the key to greatness in his and in every life: "Who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, and his heart to God." Was it any wonder

that the Chinese listened to him as though he were a messenger from the skies, and that the poor besotted African tribes actually believed that he had come from the land above the stars. A life of such sublime self-forgetfulness in its devotion to the wants of others is a sweet, grand song in the storm and shipwreck of human ambitions and hopes.

This is not only the law of the highest for man; it is, as well, the highest reach in the love of God. What is our most exalted and intimate thought of God? It is not his omnipotence, nor his omniscience, nor his omnipresence, nor his immortality, nor his incomparable majesty and glory; but our highest thought of God is when we think of him opening his hands to dispense his favors upon creation everywhere dependent upon him. "God so loved . . . , that he gave." It is this spirit of service that gives infinite attraction to Jesus of Nazareth. Not his miracles, not his triumph over the grave, but the laying down of his life in unselfish sacrifice for others—this is the mighty magnet that draws the world to Christ. His resurrection appeals to the mind; but his Cross is an appeal to the heart. No one ever truly saw the Cross of Christ that the vision did not break his heart. Why? Because it was the world's sublimest manifestation of unselfish love. All the charms of the Cross would be dispelled if selfishness could be detected in the Master's life and sacrifice. The Cross of Jesus is but an empty shell if he did not vicariously die to expiate the sins of men.

It is through the vicarious element that we are today the heirs of all that is noble and good among men. The great principles of liberty of thought and liberty of speech are vouchsafed to us today through the vicarious sufferings and sacrifices of those who wrought before us. If the vicarious element in life is to be blotted out, go yonder to Washington's monument, in the nation's capital, and tear it down. Tear down every shaft in all the states that marks the resting place of the nation's sons who fell in her defense. They speak of vicarious sufferings and sacrifices in the securing of all the rich treasures, civil and religious, to which we are heirs today.

The Chinese have a legend: An old-time potter long and earnestly strove to give his vases a certain beautiful tint, but it was all in vain. At last in desperation he threw himself into the furnace and was consumed. When the pottery was taken out, the beautiful color he had desired was upon it. This is a true parable. Earth's most beautiful thing is a noble character, and no character can receive its fairest coloring until self is wholly given up in service to secure it.

VI

THE OLD-TIME RELIGION

Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.—JEREMIAH 6:16

Christianity is not one of the world's luxuries; it is a necessity. It is the spiritual atmosphere in which the gentler graces grow. Under its benign influence the bonds of brotherhood more powerful than tethers of steel are forged which hold human society together. Without it moral values would be debased and much of the hard won and rich inheritance of the past lost. What the world needs now above everything else is New Testament Christianity, the religion that fronts men to God. This is a greater need than national prosperity, for no matter how wealthy the world may be, lasting peace, abiding joy, and true prosperity will never come while men are turned away from God. We need the love of God in our hearts more than anything else right now. We need it more than we need railway extension, more than we need bigger wheat crops, more than we need manufacturing plants, more than we need merchant marine, more than we need material development of every sort.

How can civilization be saved, and by what agency? Look to Christ and learn. Behold him pausing for a moment on a high vantage point overlooking Jerusalem. Below him the Holy City; in

its heart the temple. But Christ weeps over Jerusalem saying, "If thou hadst known, . . . in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but . . . thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Christ knew wherein the destiny of that people rested. Or the destiny of any people, every people! Who had told him? Oh, it's no deeply hidden secret. It required no special divine revelation beyond the Word of God, an understanding of the nature of God's holiness and of the moral order of life and the universe under God. We, too, can know it. And, enlightened by his Word and quickened in spiritual insight, we can see whither the trail which nations are choosing for themselves today is leading. That path leads inevitably to doom.

Christ would save Jerusalem. He would save the nations of the world today. He has a way. Look to him and learn; and, having learned, proclaim it to all. Seeing clearly the doom hanging over Jerusalem and endeavoring to make one last attempt toward saving the Jewish people, what does he do, where does he go? Not to the Chamber of Commerce, not to the banking institutions, not to the colleges and universities, not to the courts or the functionaries of government. No, to none of these! But to the Temple he went, for therein he knew there was being wrought out the destiny of his own and of all people.

Emerson was right when, in speaking of the old gray temples of faith and prayer—monuments of stone reared by human love and hope—he said:

"Nature has adopted them into her race and given them an equal place with the Andes and Ararat. These temples mean that if there is anywhere one good man, there will be another and another, and there will be many." It is this fellowship of faith and love and life in Christ whereof our temples are symbols that should have a new birth in each succeeding generation.

I

The danger for the world is not on its economic and civic side, but on its spiritual side; it is the danger of a vitiated religion. Jeremiah sensed this danger, and in the text warned Israel against falling away from the faith. He knew that national wickedness would bring national disaster. He looked with prophetic eye into the future and saw God's judgments coming upon the nation for its sin. He heard the tramp of armies as they marched through the land and laid it waste. He saw the Temple fallen into disuse and decay, and looked upon the broken walls of Jerusalem and the wasted plains of Palestine. There was but one salvation; Israel must turn to the old ways and walk in them; Israel must come back to the old-time religion.

Paul, the great apostle, sensed this same danger and warned Timothy of the perilous times that should come when men, having lost the old-time faith, would become "lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent,

fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." In this time of declension Timothy is admonished earnestly to hold fast the old-time faith.

Both the prophet and the apostle, though under different conditions, plead for the restoration of the old-time religion. This should be the plea of the prophets of God today. The armies of Babylon that sacked the sacred city are not the only forces that carry God's people away into captivity. Worldliness, unbelief, compromise, spiritual inertia, religious indifference, and materialism are present-day agencies of destruction. These are besieging and sacking our cities. There is but one salvation for us, and that is to seek "the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein"; it is "to hold fast the form of sound words"; it is to find the old-time religion.

The world needs today the ministry of men like Jeremiah and Paul, a ministry that holds fast the truth as revealed in Christ. There is a body of teaching, "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," for which we are to earnestly contend. The preservation of this faith is more important than the unity and fraternity of professed Christians. Our Lord did not pray for his disciples "that they might be one" until he had first prayed to the Father to "sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

Every true child of God prays for the unity of Christians, but not at the expense of the truth. Surely he is dead of soul who does not earnestly long for those who have accepted Christ Jesus as Saviour and Lord to love him well enough to live and toil together in the spirit of his life; but even here loyalty to Christ and fidelity to truth cannot be sacrificed to fraternal sentiment. The two must go together. There can be no surrender where the gospel is involved. What we preach is just as important as the spirit we manifest in our preaching; for there should be no conflict between the gospel of Christ and the spirit of Christ. We are none of his if we have not his spirit; neither are we his ministers if we preach not his gospel. A militant ministry holding the form of sound words and unyielding in its loyalty to the inspired gospel is necessary if we would have a church radiant and redeeming. Such a ministry must needs have the divine religion. It must needs preach the true gospel. It must call men to repentance in the old-time way. And this is what the world needs. This racketing, boisterous, materialistic world needs most of all to get right with God; it needs the old-time religion.

II

The old-time religion is not the religion of any one century; it is the religion of eternity. It roots in the promise God made to the guilty pair in the Garden of Eden that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, and it flowers and

fruits on Calvary. Through all the years this most ancient of all religions has erected the houses of worship and the altars of prayer, the most needed of all the homing places of the soul. It has concerned itself primarily with man's relation to God. The fundamental need of the race changes not with the passing years. The eternal verities remain. God, man, sin, redemption, salvation, service, heaven, hell, the resurrection, eternal life—these are the things with which the old-time religion has to do. God is not the great I Was, but the great I Am, moving in the course of all days, and every day, working out his purpose. Hence the religion that is divine must be the religion that is eternal.

Christianity is the final form of the old-time religion. It is that to which all revelation points. It is the final answer to all predictions of and questions regarding any alleged "final religion" or "new religion" which is to save the world.

Many pretended messiahs, religious teachers, and reformers have offered cures for the ills of humanity, but none of these has been able to heal the world's hurt. The ills that infect the race are real and cannot be cured by fake nostrums. Sin is in the world blighting human life, and under every other gospel but the gospel of Christ it has waxed worse and worse. Paganism is selfish, debasing, cruel, and produces a debased and cruel civilization. Man-made religions are false lights in a dark world. They offer no hope to humanity in this world nor in the world to come. Has any man-made religion or sys-

tem of moral reform been able to cast out the demons that infest humanity: the selfishness, the lust, the wrath, the pride, the intemperance, the covetousness, the lawlessness and the corruption that curse the race? History answers in cataclysms of blood and tears, in lands depopulated, in cities sacked, in destroyed civilizations whose ruins stand as grim, ghastly monuments of man's crushing cruelty and unholy ambition. Human systems of philosophy, efforts of education, methods of personal development and cultural schemes of every kind have ever been unable to take out of the heart of man that bent toward evil which chains him to the baser in his nature. Christianity alone can make out of a sinful man a new creature.

III

But what is Christianity? At this point the age-long battle of the creeds begins, and this battle has raged largely because of a segmental approach to the religion of Christ. Some have looked upon him as a teacher only, giving to the world a creed to be believed; others have looked upon him as a spiritual leader only, emancipating men and leaving them free to follow their own emotional and spiritual reactions. The one attitude tends to legalism, the other to liberalism. Neither one is correct.

It is true that Christ gives to us a teaching which is the basis for a creed to be believed, and that he also emancipates us from bondage to the letter of the law. But he does more than this; he gives

us a new life which is fundamental to both of these things. Hence Christianity is neither a narrow orthodoxy fortified by an array of proof texts on the one hand, nor on the other is it an easy-going liberalism which ends in indifference and futility; it is a new life in Christ which we live through faith.

The great man-made religions of the world are divided into two kinds: those that emphasize personality and those that emphasize principles. It is the distinction of Christianity that it unites what man-made religions separate: the appeal of a person and the claims of truth, keeping the two properly related. The seeker after truth need not bandage his eyes, and the hungry heart need not go empty away. In Christianity life and truth are joined; the life that makes us sons of God is joined with the truth that makes us free.

IV

Christ is Christianity. We hear a great deal these days about getting back to this or that—back to the church, or back to the Bible, or back to the creed of our fathers—but what we need is to get back to New Testament Christianity, not Christianity as interpreted by this sect or that, but Christianity as embodied in the Christ of the New Testament.

We need to see Jesus. We need to see him, as the first Christians saw him, in the integrity of his Person and the sincerity of his life, and to receive from him what they received—a faith that dissolves doubts and an inspiration that conquers difficulties.

We need to know the New Testament Christ; to get back to the New Testament conception of the Lord Jesus Christ; back to the facts that lie behind all theologies and creeds; back to the Person who embodies the truth; back to that which the apostles heard and saw and looked upon and handled of the Word of life.

There is danger of covering up and losing the *living* Word while we are trying to organize for the propagation of the written Word. When an inspiration is organized into an institution—when a rapture becomes a ritual—the loss of vital things is almost inevitable. Here is the old dilemma: the eternal warfare between mysticism and institutionalism, between prophet and priest. Both are necessary. Without form the spirit becomes a disembodied ghost, but when form—whether it be dogma or ritual—becomes an end within itself, the spirit is lost; it becomes a cadaver. We need a living church to save a dead world.

The imperial value of Christianity centers in the Person and the character of Christ. Christianity did not spring up of its own accord and create Christ; a real Christ appeared in the world and created Christianity. Christianity is the religion of a Book, but the subject and author of that Book is Christ. Christianity is the realization of truth—the experimental realization of truth—but it is so because Christ, its heart and life, is The Truth. Christ is the Son of God. His deity is the basis of value. In his Person he is divine; in his teachings he is divine;

in his redemptive work he is divine. If he be not God With Us, then Christianity is, after all, only a stage in the social evolution of the race; if he be God With Us, then Christianity is a heaven-sent religion, the doctrines of grace are eternal truths, the church is a divine institution, redemption is a divine provision, and the New Testament is a divine revelation, authoritative, final, and complete.

When we get back to Christ as revealed in the New Testament, we get back to the faith of Christ. We then have not only a basis for a creed, but we have the creed of Christ himself. One cannot read the New Testament story of Christ's life without realizing that he had a unique attitude toward the things of the spiritual world. In fact, the spiritual world seems to be more real to him than the material world. In his thought it is more lasting and of more value. His idea was: "the world is merely a bridge; we are to pass over it and not build our dwellings on it." These earthly days are but the beginning days; life itself goes on forever.

His creed was constructive, hopeful, dynamic. He believed in and had fellowship with a sovereign God, whom he called Father; he believed that this Heavenly Father had revealed himself to man in two ways—in the written word and in the living word—and that this revelation was authoritative and sufficient. He believed that man was the creature of God, that he had fallen from his original estate of innocence and happiness into sin and that he was in his present state under the dominion of Satan,

but that he was precious in God's sight. He believed that his own life was inexorably connected with the destiny of the human race and that man's salvation was conditioned upon his sacrificial death on the cross. He believed that man must be fundamentally changed in his nature—born from above—before he could enter into or even see the kingdom of God. He believed that the kingdom of God was spiritual, that it was all important, and that ultimately it would triumph over all earthly kingdoms. He believed that a right relationship between God and man would result in the right kind of character in man and in the right sort of civilization in the world. He believed that there is a heaven and a hell,—heaven a place prepared for the righteous, and hell a place of punishment. He believed that there was a future day in which God would judge all men according to their works. He believed that there would be a resurrection of the body, both of the just and of the unjust. He believed that his gospel should be preached to all nations. He believed that there would be a final consummation consistent with eternal love. He offered his faith as well as his life to the world for its redemption. This faith of his is the standard for all creeds, the norm for all beliefs; it is the theological framework for the old-time religion.

V

The old-time religion is a universal religion. It could not be otherwise. Christ is the universal Saviour. The good news announced by Jesus is not

something that is applicable to the Jews alone; it is not something for you or me as Anglo-Saxon or American. It is worldwide in its significance, meeting the needs of man as man. The cardinal elements in the teaching and personality of Jesus Christ make him the universal man, and if the Saviour of anyone, then Saviour for the entire race. Jesus' appeal was to man as man; it depended on no local nor limiting consideration. A brief analysis of a few of the cardinal elements in his gospel will reveal in crystal clearness its universal horizon.

In his own experience Jesus found God to be a loving Heavenly Father, caring for all men everywhere, seeking them in self-giving love, eager to help them, yearning to bring them into fellowship with himself and with one another. To him God was the universal Father claiming reverent worship from all men.

Jesus saw man, made in the image of God, as having an inherent value regardless of race, attainment, or other considerations. The preciousness of the individual is taught in parable after parable. All these attitudes of Jesus have to do with humanity as a whole and are utterly unconditioned by distinctions of race or class. It is this essential unity of humanity, as Jesus viewed it, which makes possible a worldwide human fellowship in Christ. It demands a worldwide preaching of the gospel.

He held also that all men are members of one family, and therefore should be united to one another in love and mutual service and helpfulness. The

brotherhood which enshrines such relationships, springing out of faith in one common loving Father, is made possible through the mediatorial work of Christ. It brings those participating in it into the spiritual family of God. There is one family of the redeemed composed of individuals from every nation and kindred and tribe and tongue.

Christ's teaching is consistently universal. The Sermon on the Mount, the great parables, the summary of the law as love to God and love to man—these know nothing of racial or national or other limits less wide than all humanity. In his life, which is an expression of his message, this same universality is revealed. If he taught that all men were brothers, no less did he actually live among them as if they were. In his last conversation with his disciples he told them to go into all the world with the message of life. The old-time religion is in its very nature a missionary religion. It is impossible to believe deeply in the love of God as Christ reveals it, without dedicating ourselves to a worldwide missionary task.

VI

The old-time religion is the religion of world redemption. The tragedy of the race is sin. The need of the race is forgiveness. Right here centers the heart of the gospel of Christ. It is the good news of God's forgiving grace which is, through the atonement of Christ, made available for the whole family of man.

"The greatest need of Protestantism," says Frederick K. Stamm writing in *The Forum*, "is the ability to quicken in the human heart a sense of sin, and the necessity for an experience of God. It needs a return to severe Calvinism. The kind that stands up and looks the natural man in the eye and tells him that he is damned because of sin. We have been laboring under the delusion that man is essentially good; that he is no longer a sinner. We have humanized Christianity, and in doing so, we have shorn the church of its power to redeem men by making them see their sin."

The present tragedy is that the gospel has become in the preaching of many a gentle, soporific deadening of the senses and lulling of the soul to sleep in the belief that somehow everyone will wake up after death in the glory of the celestial city. In such a gospel Jesus is a nice, benign being, who went about healing the sick, folding his hands in prayer, tenderly laying them on the heads of little children, and who was at last tragically nailed to a cross. Ask what Jesus has done for the world and these protagonists of this gospel will tell you: "He has taught that true happiness is attainable only by self-denial." Such a religion is shorn of its power to redeem.

Christianity is primarily a great blessed fact, the reconciliation of man to God and man to man; not simply a dogma or a system of holy ordinances. What doctrines there are derive their value from the relation in which they stand to Christ. Revealed

religion throughout, from the beginning to the end of the Bible, has to do with the manifestation of God, as the God of grace, as One who is affected by the sins and miseries of men, and who in love and pity seeks to redeem and to save men from their sins.

If such be its character, then, to be true to itself, Christianity cannot be simply a fastidious cult, nice and dainty; but it must be willing to lay its redeeming and healing hand on all spiritual maladies, even on those which are most repulsive and desperate. It is bound to be the religion of the masses, for the great unwashed in every sense, for the ignorant and erring, for the slaves of evil desire and habit; it is a religion for the depraved and sinful; it is a universal religion. Its proper vocation is to find the lost, to teach the ignorant, to set free those in bonds, to wash the unclean, to save the sinful.

VII

THE VISION OF SERVICE

I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.—ISAIAH 6:1

Vision is one of the most gracious blessings our Heavenly Father has given us. Recently I was made to appreciate this blessing more by a blind man I saw on a city street. He was standing with head bare, singing in a husky voice, "Silver Threads Among the Gold." His whole attitude was that of helplessness. Plaintively he sang. Appealingly his sightless eyes turned from side to side. With hat in hand he stood. The vision lingers with me. Blind! No mountains for him. No wide stretching plains. No white mist and brightness of immaculate snow. No clouds driven through the sky. No moon, no sun, no day, no spring with its sheen of flowers, no summer with its fields of waving grain, no autumn banked with gold and purple, no face of friends to gladden and cheer the heart—just night, never-ending night.

But is there no blindness except the physical? Are there no eyes but those of the body? Is there nothing to see but matter? Are there not men and women groping their way through life who see nothing of the presence and power and goodness of God, who behold not the glories of the spiritual landscape,

who pass through the beauties of the kingdom of God and see none of its splendor—men and women who are spiritually blind? Is there nothing to see but the material things of this material world?

Just when we begin to wonder if this physical world is all, and to grow weary of it if it is, out steps a seer, a man whose eyes are not veiled with the film of material things, and declares that this physical world is not all, that he has seen the Lord high and lifted up. Such a man was Isaiah. With his soul burdened for the future of his people, he came to the Temple to worship, and as he prayed the Lord, who never empties places in our hearts and homes or in the nation or the church except to give a richer fullness, appeared unto him. The veil of the Temple was withdrawn and the Holy of holies discovered to his vision. He saw the Lord, sitting as a king upon his throne. His train, the symbol of dignity and glory, filled the holy place, while around him hovered the attendant seraphim, spirits of purity, zeal, and love, chanting in alternate chorus, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts." To have such a vision is to enter confidently upon tomorrow with a new spirit.

I

This vision came to Isaiah in the year King Uzziah died. This is not by chance; it is by purpose. Prophecy does not chronicle by time, but by crises in human experience. No king since David had brought so much glory to Israel as Uzziah, but the king is dead and Isaiah feared that with the death of the

king the linchpin of national life had been removed and that the nation would rush speedily into confusion and disorder. God would have Isaiah know that kings may die and governments may change, but the Lord is always on his throne, high and lifted up, and his purpose for the world changes not. Isaiah had feared chaos; but in the place of chaos there emerges the Lord of order.

Men in all generations have had these same pessimistic fears. We have them today. We rivet our gaze upon the incidental until the incidental becomes the essential. We put our trust in things of time and distrust the things of eternity. What will Israel do when King Uzziah dies? What will this or that church do when bereft of a certain leader? What will this or that nation do when its outstanding statesman passes away? And then the long-feared crisis comes—King Uzziah is dead. But instead of the darkness of the grave there is the dazzling glory of a forgotten heaven. The transient power and pageantry of the earthly passes, but the passing only removes the veil from the face of the eternal. Instead of a despairing end, we have a new beginning.

It is a great thing to have men among us who can see visions of the Lord; men who steal away into the temple from the clamor and confusion of the market place, away from the whirl and din of world activity, to worship; men who hear messages and see visions that give life a new meaning. We need these men. We grow tired of earth's bleak monotony and

cry out in despair. Is there nothing besides and beyond these bleary-eyed lamps that skirt the river of time? And then a prophet of God steps out and says: "I have seen the Lord, seated on a throne, high and lifted up," and immediately life is robbed of its barrenness. These men push back the horizon line of our vision so that we can see the hills of eternity from whence cometh our spiritual strength. These men are our prophets. Without them we would be marooned in the fog and cloud banks of uncertainty in a changing human order.

In the old castle of Stirling, Scotland, travelers are shown, in one of the tower rooms, a number of unique relics. In one corner of the room there is the pulpit of John Knox. In another corner of the room there are a few long spears covered with rust, found on the field of Bannockburn, which lies just beyond the castle walls. John Knox's pulpit, and the spears of Bannockburn. The one, the type of the Lord high and lifted up; the other, the type of King Uzziah. Which symbolizes the eternal? Ah, the forces that radiated from the pulpit of the Scottish preacher will help to shape Scottish life and character when Bannockburn has become an un-influential memory standing vague and indefinite on the horizon of a far-distant time. When King Uzziah and all his successors are dead and earthly kings shall reign no more, the Lord will be on his throne high and lifted up and the forces emanating from his throne will be marching on.

II

This vision was given to Isaiah to prepare him for God's service. God was calling him to a serious and arduous task and he needed the assurance of divine support. No man can do great things unless he is sustained by the conviction that God has sent him and that God is with him. No Christian has ever become truly great and noble and enthusiastic and utterly self-denying until he has had a vision of the Lord seated on a throne high and lifted up. Luther had such a vision. When climbing the stairs at Rome he thought of the words of Paul, "The just shall live by faith," and out of that experience the Reformation was born. John Knox had such an experience, and when he preached men cried out to God to save them. President Edwards had such an experience, and when he preached his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," strong men clung to the posts of the church and cried aloud for mercy. Evans Roberts had such an experience, and all Wales was swept by a revival of religion the like of which has scarcely been since the day of Pentecost.

The trouble with our modern world is that the men living in it do not want to see "the Lord seated on a throne, high and lifted up." They want a carefree life, unhindered by moral and spiritual restraints. They do not want the high and rigid standards of right and wrong set by the Lord. The serious purposefulness involved in a vision of God would disturb them. Ask the man on the street if he wants

a vision of God "high and lifted up" and he will tell you promptly that he does not want any outside deity interfering with him in his affairs. Take current literature, and one is surprised at the absence of God, and, what is still more surprising, this absence of God in literature is because the characters created in current fiction are such that they could not desire God except for purposes of profanity. Imagine the leading characters in some of the best sellers of today faced with the injunction of the prophet, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Such an injunction would be wholly contrary to the nature of these leading characters.

The present condition of the world is the result of man's attitude toward God. We are living today in a world that is moving backward, back toward the tyranny and oppression and slavery and paganism of a past age because men have eliminated God from national and international life. "The sum of the whole matter is," said Woodrow Wilson, "that our civilization cannot survive materially unless it is redeemed spiritually. It can be saved only by becoming permeated with the spirit of Christ and made free and happy by the practices which spring from that spirit."

That God does make himself known to men and guide them in the work he has called them to do is the unquestioned testimony of countless hosts of the redeemed who in every age have been led by his Spirit. Dr. Bushnell, in one of his sermons, says:

“We have vast crowds of witnesses rising up in every age who testify out of their own consciousness to the work of the Holy Spirit and the new creative power of Jesus who by his spirit is revealed in their hearts. In nothing do they consent with a more hymn-like harmony than in the testimony that their inward transformation is a divine work—a new revelation of God by the spirit in their human consciousness. They all testify with one voice—Paul, Clement, Origen, St. Bernard, Huss, Luther, Gerson, Finelon, Baxter, Flavel, Doddridge, Wesley, Edwards, Bernard, Taylor—all the innumerable hosts of believers that have entered into rest, whether it be the persecuted saints of the first days driven home in chariots of blood, or the saint who died but yesterday in the arms of his family—that God does lead, guide and empower his servants.”

Dr. B. H. Carroll of blessed memory, a man mighty of God, in his sermon on “Rivers of Living Water,” says: “If there is any success that I have ever attained (and I have had some), it is that before I entered upon any task I isolated myself from everybody in the world and stayed alone with God and fought the battle to a finish there before I ever opened my lips to men. And there did come unto me a consciousness of spiritual power that promised absolute success—a deep conviction that never wavered a hair’s breadth until the thing was finished. I know that power belongeth to God. I know that if a man is not endued with power from

on high he cannot do anything." Who will say that Dr. Carroll did not receive a revelation from God?

III

Let us not think, however, that a vision of the Lord will make it easy for anyone. It never does. A vision of God has always meant confession, dedication, struggle, and service. Such a vision will break one all up. When Isaiah saw the Lord he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." The prophet does not come away from this vision triumphing in what he has seen; he does not hold the vision as a prize, and mock other men because they have not had similar revelations. He says in effect, "If you ever see the Lord, high and lifted up, you will fall down in humility, in self-abhorrence, in self-helplessness, and in self-accusation."

It is always so. To see the Lord is to see oneself a sinner. The prophet saw the Lord, and sin loomed big in his vision. He had been a man of unclean lips all along, but he had not seen the uncleanness before. Now it is different. In the white light of the divine holiness every speck and spot are revealed. There is no word of accusation. There is no word from anyone saying, "Isaiah, you are a bad man; you are a great sinner, and this vision was sent to fill you with shame and condemnation." There was nothing of this kind. No word of accusation was

needed. Isaiah saw the Lord and felt himself reduced to dust and ashes.

The practical truth is that a disclosure of the holiness of God is the surest way to produce conviction of sin. I know a Sunday school pupil to whom the teacher read the Ten Commandments and emphasized the wickedness of disobeying them. The lad was moved to tears, but he said, "It is just so with you, too, teacher." How shall we get men to know that they are sinners? Not by promiscuous pelting and wholesale charges of moral dereliction, for this will not produce the humble, fervent prayer for pardon that a truly penitent soul should offer. The first response from such pelting will very likely be, "Who told you that I was such a sinner?" and the second, "You are another." What we need to do is to lift up the Lord so that the individual will see him seated on a throne high and lifted up and hear the voice of the attendant train of heaven as they sing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." This vision will melt a wicked heart to repentance.

It melted the prophet's heart and caused him to confess his sins. He cried out, "I am undone." The response of God to his cry was immediate. This is God's habit. He does not keep the penitent soul waiting. The voice of repentance is answered by the angel of love. The cry of guilt is answered by the fire of cleansing. The only thing needed and demanded of Isaiah was to feel a sense of sin and to express this feeling in a cry which voiced his conviction of sin. This is what everyone must do. There

can be no slurring over of guilt in the presence of God. The soul that has not seen itself a lost sinner before God may have morality, but it cannot have Christianity. The atoning work of Christ finds its reason in the spiritual condition of the race. Man is a lost sinner, and his lost condition must become a conscious personal experience with him or else he will feel no real need for the salvation Christ offers.

The cleansing and forgiveness which the Lord had for Isaiah was of divine preparation and divine application. The live coal that touched his lips came from the altar. It was brought by the hand of a heavenly messenger. It was laid upon his lips. The altar symbolizes sacrifice, and the act of the seraph in taking the live coal and placing it on the lips of the prophet typifies the work of the Holy Spirit in making the sacrifice of the Cross effectual in a sinner's cleansing. God erected the altar in the Temple. It symbolizes and looks to the cross where Christ offered himself for our sins. God erected the cross on Golgotha. All the sinner is required to do is to fall down before him who was nailed to the cross and cry, "Woe is me! for I am undone." "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Out of this vision came a life of consecration and service. The prophet says: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." After cleansing, the call to service is heard. God had no doubt been calling all along, but the prophet

had not heard. God is calling to us, but we cannot hear his call if our ears are filled with the clamor and clang of world noises. He is calling some to mission fields, some to the ministry, some to be teachers in the Sunday school, some to be deacons and church workers, and some to preach the unsearchable riches of divine grace. Do we hear his call? Let us go down on our knees in humble confession of our sins that the divine Spirit may lay the coal of cleansing fire on our lips and purge away our sins. When our lives have been cleansed by the purifying fire of God's love, then will we hear and heed the call of God to service.

IV

A vision of the Lord opened Isaiah's eyes to the condition of the social order in which he lived. He saw that sin pooled itself in social conditions. The people with whom he dwelt had unclean lips. Sin is subtle and deceiving. It cannot be confined to individual disobedience. It entrenches itself in human institutions, practices, fashions, customs, and habits. Canon Donaldson, of Westminster Abbey, is reported as having catalogued today's seven deadly social sins as follows: "Politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce and industry without morality, science without Christianity, and worship without sacrifice."

This summary is both expansive and intensive. It is a statement of the age-old problem of social

evil both pointed and modern. The generalized statements about sin have become to many people mere abstractions separated from their everyday thoughts—something for theologians to argue about and evangelists to shout against. But Canon Donaldson in his series of contrasted relationships, his picture of absolute qualities without their moral checks, has provided a characterization of sin which is personal, national, social, and universal in its scope and manifestation.

Sin can no longer be defined in personal terms alone. Men are so organized in our modern world that sin belongs to group life and to national life. If we want to produce more Christians, and better Christians, we must concern ourselves about the social order in which we live. We cannot expect to put a converted man into a selfish, competitive, economic order—an order that disregards human values and puts profit above all else—and get back a well-rounded, fully developed Christian character. We cannot talk to young Christians for half an hour on Sunday about purity, temperance, and modesty and then send them two or three times a week to a two-hour movie that glorifies adultery, drunkenness, luxury, and selfishness and expect to get back well-developed Christians.

No group of people are more interested in winning individuals to Christ than our missionaries. They have gone out to Japan, China, South America, Africa, and Europe to save souls, and yet no group is more interested in building new communities and

new nations than these same missionaries. They have had to care for people wherever they found them in the whole range of life's activities and interests. In order to reach the people they loved, the missionaries have been the explorers of the world. They have opened the trails through the wilderness. They have become philologists and translators of languages. They built the lexicons and the grammars. They built schools and eleemosynary institutions. All of this was done in order to make the gospel they preached effective. They had to win the people away from their belief in witch doctors, and so the missionary became the physician stretching across the world the healing hand of Jesus. But why educate the people and cure them of their sickness and disease only to send them back to homes of abysmal poverty and continual subjection to economic exploitations? And so the missionary had to become in many instances an agriculturist, an industrialist, and a champion of the economic and political rights of the people. Is there not something significant in the fact that one of the very best modern books on Christianity's responsibility for building a new world is written by a missionary from his field of labor in India?

Every Christian is obligated to live a Christlike life. He has a commission to build a new world. There is an almost revolting hypocrisy about the person who complacently prides himself on his personal honesty, purity, and kindness, and yet resolutely refuses to help make these principles

worldwide. What becomes of our personal honesty when we consent to an economic system that is consistently cheating, defrauding, and degrading the weaker and more dependent sections of society? How can one claim to be pure while he entirely ignores the problem of prostitution and the effect of unemployment and a low wage scale upon moral delinquency? How can we pretend to be personally kind, while we are silent on racial prejudice and injustice and are indifferent to the world's twin monsters, poverty and war? There is no Christianity worthy of the name that refuses to face the whole of life and does not seek to find some way of dealing with that whole.

Have we seen the Lord seated on a throne, high and lifted up? This vision should be more intimate and personal and real to us than it was to the prophet. In Christ we see what the prophet could not see—a holiness made sublime because it is revealed in a Person whom we can know, trust, and love. It is not simply a vision, but a presence and a power. We can see through the smoke which filled the Temple the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and the cross upon the altar. In Christ we behold the One who lives, loves, judges, forgives, cleanses, saves. How much fuller is our vision than the vision of Isaiah! And, like his, our vision is redeeming.

VIII

THE LIFE AND WALK OF FAITH

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so
walk ye in him.—COLOSSIANS 2:6

If one looks only at the unpromising qualities of human nature, the collapse of confidence, and the confusion of world affairs, he will no doubt conclude that this is an exceedingly difficult age for Christianity. And indeed it is. It is not easy to hold Christian ideas about the love of God in a time when there is so much hatred in the world. A belief in human values and the hope of establishing a new society of good will among men are difficult to maintain when such little value is placed upon human life, when racial hatred and jealousy are so intense, when nationalism with its racial antipathies is segregating the peoples of the world into antagonistic groups, and when so-called Christian nations are looking at one another with jealous eyes across gun barrels.

Christianity, however, is not to be judged by human conditions, and, what is more, its success or failure does not depend upon the state of world affairs. The age in which Paul lived was more difficult for Christianity than our own. Paganism with its hardening effect had produced a social order wholly averse to Christian principles. There was a complete collapse of the moral and spiritual values. The

world was filled with unbelief, immorality, and social injustice. There was everything in the life of the world at that time to indicate that Christianity would fail to establish itself permanently in the social order and life of the pagan world.

Paul, however, was not disturbed by world conditions. In the midst of the moral and spiritual chaos of the pagan world, and when he himself was in prison for his faith, he wrote to the Colossian Christians about the triumph of their faith in Christ. There is no more inspiring or hopeful passage in all Christian literature than the opening paragraphs of this letter. The reason for his confidence and hope is Christ. Enthroned in power and majesty over the material creation, endued with the fullness of the Godhead bodily, equipped in every particular to be man's Redeemer, this matchless Saviour of men redeems us through his blood, and, indwelling and empowering us for our task of witnessing, gives the assurance of the world's ultimate redemption. The success of Christianity is conditioned on the place which the Father in heaven has given to Christ and not on conditions which may exist in this world.

I

The question of all questions is, Have we received Christ Jesus the Lord? Has he come into your life? Has he come into my life? Do we live in the light of his countenance, walk in the strength of his guiding spirit, and feel the exhilarating, redeeming, uplifting power of his presence? This is not a little

matter. To receive Christ is the most fundamental, far-reaching experience in life. Jesus of Nazareth is the most tremendous personality in all history. To receive him means to tie one's life onto and up with a world-changing, world-redeeming Person. It is to connect oneself with the means for the fulfilment of all human hope.

A great scientist, Christian in faith and understanding, said in a public address not long ago: "A definite Christian faith is the one really important thing in life. I mean that literally. It is vastly more important than any profession, than any scientific research, or than any other of all the activities of a man's life, and that from a strictly practical, common-sense point of view. The intimate experiences of life have shown that the Bible is the living Word, definitely God's word to me personally, and to accept it and the Christ which it presents is the superlative need of every soul." (Quoted from *The Presbyterian*, Sept. 2, 1937.)

Thinking men through all the ages have felt their need of divine help. They have recognized their proneness to evil and have sought and longed for a divine deliverer. In ancient Greece, Socrates declared: "We must wait until someone comes from God to instruct us how to behave toward the Deity and toward men." Plato, thinking in the same vein, said: "It is necessary that a law-giver be sent from heaven to instruct us. Oh, how greatly do I desire to see that man and to know who he is!" The longing of those Greek philosophers was the longing of

the Hebrew people, waiting for the Messiah. It has been the longing of all mankind. The longing of the human heart finds its fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent into this world to redeem and save it, and when a soul accepts him, that soul finds spiritual satisfaction.

But someone may ask, Who is Jesus of Nazareth? What is he to us? Can a man who lived twenty centuries ago mean anything to the world today? Certainly not if he is only a man. That which is passed does not seriously concern us, if it has to do only with human frailty. But Jesus of Nazareth has not passed. He is not simply a character in history; he lives today in the life of the world. But if we know him through history only, he means nothing to us; we must know him as Jesus Christ, the One through whom God reveals himself to men. As H. Emil Brunner, the great Swiss theologian says: "Jesus of Nazareth was a man, but different from all other men. In His life something happened that never happened before. In Him God's will, God's world-plan, God Himself, whom we do not apprehend, but can only surmise, became manifest." (*Our Faith*—p. 65.)

There are several attitudes we may take toward Christ. There are several ways in which we may receive him. What we are thinking about now, however, concerns not so much the theory as the practical issue of the matter. How have we received Christ? What is he to us right now? Have we received him simply as an historical personage? We

should so receive him, for it is impossible to come into a knowledge of the true Christ without believing that he actually lived among men. But this is not enough. One may study the gospels historically and secure from this study a portrait of Christ that will be transcendentally beautiful and yet have only an intellectual picture of Christ. We must have more than this. Christ must be real in our experience. He must be a fact in our hearts as well as a fact of history.

Have we received Christ only as the teacher of a new religion? I would not have you think that the teachings of Jesus are unimportant. It is necessary that we should know what Christ himself believed and taught about his own person, mission, and work. Nevertheless a man can know what Jesus taught and yet not have Christ as a personal Saviour. We must think of Christ as something more than a plan of salvation. If we see no more in Christ than a teacher, then he cannot be in us the hope of glory. We must receive Christ as more than an historical character, or a plan of salvation, or an ordinance of the church, or a philosophy of life; we must receive him as a soul-saving, life-redeeming, sin-destroying Saviour. We must receive him as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

In the Smithsonian Institute in Washington there is an engraving of the Constitution of the United States, very skilfully done in copper plate. When looking at it from a certain angle it appears to be nothing more than a piece of writing, but when seen

from a different angle, with the light falling on it just right, the letters fade away and we see the face of George Washington. That is the way it should be with history, and doctrine, and creed, and ordinance, and Scripture with reference to Christ. When looked at from the angle of faith, with the light of divine truth falling on them, we should see the face of the Lord Jesus; not ideas, nor doctrines, nor writings, but Jesus Christ himself, the light and source and sustaining power of all.

II

Receiving Christ is a personal matter. As spectators and onlookers, we can never know Jesus as Christ. It is only when we are challenged, called to an accounting, pressed to make a personal, permanent decision, that we come to know Christ. Before we answer to this call we see nothing—nothing but a remarkable man—in Jesus of Nazareth. Others may say that he is the Saviour, the Redeemer, but it has no meaning to us. One must know Christ himself; one must, with all his soul, say yes to Christ. That alone is faith. Jesus is not the Christ for the one who is only the onlooker, the thinker, the scholar, the historically informed; he is the Christ only to the believer. “He that believeth on me, though he were dead,” says Christ, “yet shall he live.” Those alone who believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God, receive him and live.

The act of receiving Christ is the delivery of the entire life to Christ. It is a definite transaction. At some specific time the individual accepts Christ by faith as Saviour and Lord. He is ever after that joined to Christ. This reception of Christ is a spiritual crisis in the life which does not have to be repeated, but which is to be intensified and amplified day by day throughout the rest of life.

I am thinking now of a day in August and a country church nestled in the forks of the road among the elms and oaks. It is the annual protracted meeting time and from all the country round the people have come. In the rear of the church on the third day of the meeting sat a country boy not yet ten years of age. A Christian mother had told him the story of Jesus and his love. He believed that the Bible was the Word of God. At the close of the sermon the preacher stepped down from the pulpit to give the invitation. He said: "Is there anyone here who ever expects to be saved? If there is, now is the time, for we have no promise for tomorrow." That boy said in his heart, "I expect to be saved." The preacher continued: "Paul tells us in Romans that if we will confess with our mouths the Lord Jesus and believe in our hearts that God hath raised him from the dead, we shall be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. While we sing will you come and confess Christ before

men?" The congregation sang as only a congregation of Christian people can sing:

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and pow'r.

That boy in the back of the church with his soul burdened with sin, knowing deep down in his heart that he did believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God," and wanting above everything else in the world to be saved, stepped out from where he was sitting and started down the aisle of that old country church to the front to confess Christ. Something took place that day in that boy's life. Somewhere between where he was sitting and the place where the preacher stood he met Jesus face to face; he received Christ and Christ received him. It was a new experience; the beginning of a new life in Christ. Many days have passed since then, but through all the years there has been in the life of that boy an unbroken line of experiences growing out of a fuller and more complete reception and understanding of the Christ received on that day.

III

Those who receive Christ, in whose lives the love of Christ is shed abroad and through whose lives the redeeming and saving power of Christ is to be revealed, are to walk in him. The word "walk" emphasizes the idea of general conduct. It symbolizes the process of progression in the formation of char-

acter. It sets out the fact that the will of Christ is to be the governing power in the lives of those who have received him. In everything that constitutes the daily life, the presence of Christ is to be recognized; in business, in domestic relations, in social engagements, in friendships, in pleasures, in cares, in trials, in everything, the Christian is to look to Christ and depend upon him. Everywhere we go and in every experience we are to have Christ as our guide—on sea, on land, in seasons of distress or joy, in poverty or wealth, in disturbances or in peace, Christ is to be our dependence.

Christ makes us able to live the Christian life. The deepest sense of all that is not right is that we ourselves are not right, and therefore the greatest message we have from him is that things will be right in him. Think how a blind man would feel if told he would receive his sight, and how a cripple would rejoice if he were assured that he would be straight and strong again! This is only for the body. In Christ we are to become spiritually straight and strong, our souls are to be made right and fine through God's grace. This is the inconceivable, and precisely in this inconceivable subsists the heart of the Christian religion. Non-Christians may have everything but this. They have the Sermon on the Mount, the commandments, the philosophy and wisdom of Jesus, but they do not have God, who himself comes to the believer in the Person of Jesus Christ and who resides in the believer in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

When we receive Christ, he comes into our lives to become a life-saving, soul-redeeming, character-forming power. His indwelling presence is the secret of Christian living, it is the source of spirituality. Why do men live spiritually? It is because they have received Christ. Why do saved men have aspirations to holiness? It is because Christ is in them a living power constraining them to righteousness. Why do men who come to know Christ through faith have a hope of eternal life? Why do those who have received Christ have a soul-consuming passion to win a lost world to Christ? The love of Christ constrains them. Christ Jesus the Lord is the source of every impulse for righteousness. He who knows Christ as a personal experience in the life finds that from the Christ who indwells the soul all formative influences for righteousness and all the impulses for service spring. Let every Christian know that however much he may believe in historical Christianity, however strongly he may hold to the forms of orthodox theology, still the motivating power for spiritual transformation in his life is the living personal Christ whom he has received by faith and whom he has enthroned in the affections of his soul as the object of the highest adoration and love.

IV

More and more we are turning our attention to the social implications of the gospel, but we must never allow the emergence of the immediate social order as a neglected field of Christian operation to

eclipse the traditional message of Christianity to a lost world. There is a tendency today not only to rethink missions but to rethink Christianity itself. Some of the more radical critics of traditional methods are saying that much of the seeming enthusiasm for individual and personal salvation is only a compensatory activity for the church's unwillingness to face the more vast and more delicate and less romantic questions of Christianization which lie within our economic, our political, our interracial, and our cultural society. A rethinking of our approach to a complex social order with the message of Jesus may be necessary, but we must not overlook the fact that it is Christ and his way of living that changes things. Not only so, but in the final analysis every social problem narrows itself down to an individual problem. Hence, the deepest concern and the most earnest effort for the development of a Christlike social order can and should go along with the deepest concern for the salvation of the individuals composing that order. In fact, there can be no permanent transformation of the social order until the men and women who make the order what it is have received Christ and are walking in him.

God has an ideal for every one of us. What is that ideal? It is not enough to answer, the ideal is that I should be very good, or very kind, or very this, or very that. If it were not more than that, every one of us would have a different notion, and the best of us a very feeble notion of what it meant to walk in Christ. Thousands of people have set up

a tiny ladder of their own making and are saying, "I must climb to the top of it." And they think that this is walking with Christ. They have never had a vision of the ladder that reaches from earth to heaven. If we start from man's point of view, we get nowhere. We must get God's point of view. God's point of view about life is revealed in Christ.

The eternal God by his very nature wishes to express himself, reveal himself, throw himself forth in time and space. The result of this effort of God to express himself is the universe, the creation, the calling into being and the sustaining of all things. Man is the highest created instrument of God's self-expression. Through redeemed man God has planned to get his will done in the world. Christ has revealed the will of God to the world, and redeemed man is to make that will the rule of the world. Walking in Christ means "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." For the Christian this is a high calling. The true response to it comes not in creeds, covenants, pledges, and vows simply; but in such spirit, fellowship, and course of action as will give living reality to Christ in a world that is lost, such reality as will make for the world's salvation. Only Christlike men can build a Christlike social order. There is no hope for the world except through souls that have received Christ and are walking in him.

The reason for this is evident. When we receive Christ, we receive the Son of God—God manifested in the flesh—who came to this world not for the

purpose of displaying his divine power, not simply to let us know that God could reveal himself to man, but as the loving God to redeem and save and restore a ruined world. This fact tinges every item of the Christian task with a creative glory. This is more than copying Jesus; it is embodying him. It is more than reproducing Christ; it is producing him where he was not and as he was not before. This is the meaning of the life of everyone enlightened and won by the gospel. It is the meaning of every victory of personal righteousness, of every better adjustment of domestic, industrial, interracial, and international relation. It is the objective of all righteous reform, of all advance toward a more neighborly community life; it is the objective of all evangelism, missions, and Christian education.

The only way to make our religion vital is to give it currency among men; to wrap it in a napkin and put it away in a safe place is to misuse it. The one who deals with his faith this way wholly misunderstands the commission of our Lord. It is a tragic caricature of Christianity to try to reduce the conception of living and walking in Christ to a few congenial ideas about a heaven hereafter. There is no Christianity worthy the name that refuses to face the whole world with all of its problems of life and seeks to find some way of dealing with that whole. Our business as Christians is to make the religion of Jesus Christ an active element in the world's transformation and redemption. This can be done only by living and walking in Christ.

When a great musician wishes to write a symphony, before he writes down the notes he must have the harmony, the theme, and the thought in his mind. Every part of it must be in his mind. The writing of the notes is the self-expression of himself in harmony. Now, when he wishes to reproduce that symphony he must write out the score for every instrument and then train each player in his part so that he will reproduce perfectly in harmony and time the score which has been written for him. Thus trained and playing, all the instruments combined will reproduce the harmony that was in the mind of the musician before he began to write the music.

God's plan of redemption might be likened to a great symphony. In the mind of God there is the theme and the harmony. There is a score for everyone. Each redeemed soul is a player in the orchestra of redemption. His instrument is his own personality. Each one playing with his instrument keyed to the heavenly pitch, keeping time as Christ directs and all playing together, will reproduce the harmony which was in the mind of God when he planned the world's redemption. Playing our instrument in time and tune and in harmony with all the other players as Christ directs is receiving and walking in Christ.

IX

HEAVENLY ECONOMICS

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.—MATTHEW
6:20

God created man with the disposition and ability to acquire property, to lay up in store material things for future use. Some of the lower animals lay up in store, but there is no power of projecting thought into the future, nor of organizing the present with reference to some remote period. Their accumulation of things is immediate and transitory; it is prompted by instinct and not by reason. With man it is different. The acquisition, organization, management, and enjoyment of wealth are with him among the chief stimulants to activity. He organizes the whole of society with a view to the accumulation of wealth.

This desire of man to accumulate and store up material things for future use is God's method of preserving the race from want and economic disaster. Up to a certain point, therefore, the pursuit of wealth is helpful and makes for human development. If it stops there, it is in accord with divine providence. But if the getting of wealth becomes the main purpose of life, and all moral and spiritual values are made subordinate to it, then it becomes a menace to human well-being and meets with opposition not only in the realm of cause and effect,

but in the realm of revealed spiritual truth as well. Those who are acquainted with the history of the struggle for social justice and economic security know that amassed wealth, controlled by the few, has been in every age a source of social injustice and economic oppression.

It is because material goods are so good and so essential to the progress and well-being of the race that the prostitution of their use to greed, to injustice, and a failure to share are so immoral. The love of money—not money itself—is a root of all evil. The substitution of the love of gold for the love of God is the worship of mammon. Christ does not condemn the laying up of treasure; he exhorts us to lay our treasure up in the right place and for the right purpose.

I

The teaching of Christ on the question of riches does not encourage improvidence or indifference to the needs of tomorrow. No one should be either prodigal with present possessions or indifferent about the future. The exhortation, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," does not forbid the possession of earthly wealth; it is a warning against making the getting and hoarding of earthly possessions the supreme thing in life. Capital and property are necessary to social progress, to civilization, to evangelization, and to the temporal well-being of mankind. However, men should not spend their lives in storing up these things for themselves.

What a man has of earthly treasure should be held for Christ and not for self; what a man lays up for self should be treasure in heaven. The rich young ruler who came to Christ asking the way of eternal life is an illustration of what material possessions laid up for self on earth can do to a man. His riches got in the way of his salvation. He forfeited heaven for the things of earth. What should have been a help to him wrought his destruction.

The parable of the rich man is also a powerful illustration of how temporal possessions may blind a man to spiritual reality. The fields of this rich man brought forth bountifully and he reasoned within himself, saying, "What shall I do?" Here was wealth honestly acquired. The man who possessed it, however, concerned himself not with its source nor with its sequel, but only with its substance. His goods became his god. He thought as though time were eternity. He depended on his own wisdom, and felt no need of a higher power. He conferred only with his own soul and limited his consideration to his own personal interests. His universe was a dinner table and a wine cellar. These things belong to the earth and cannot be carried away from it; hence, when God called the soul of this man to the great accounting, all was left behind. A soul wholly given to the joy of material possession is desolate indeed when called away from all possibility of possession. "So is he," says Christ, "that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

This is a typical case. Every community has this same rich man. More than that, the spirit of this rich man dwells in a multitude of people who are not rich. They have their affections set on the things of this world and are giving themselves to the getting and hoarding of these earthly things. Christ says that the man who does this is foolish. There is something higher to live for. The things of this world belong to this world, and no matter how much a man may possess, there will be a very desert of desolation in the heart if he has nothing else to depend on but his earthly possessions.

Men need the other world vision to bring life into proper focus. It is hard for them to keep clear a sense of the deeper values unless life is put in a cosmic frame. Life on earth must be related to life above. Men must become conscious of God. Jesus gives this consciousness. He sets life in the frame of a conviction of God. Such a conviction heightens and deepens the meaning of every experience in life. The absence of such a conviction, the lack of a heavenly outlook and perspective which might throw a shaft of light on the earthly picture of life and man's place in it, is the major cause of the breaking down, the tearing apart, of our world order.

II

It is difficult, if not impossible, to draw a line of separation between the legitimate and the illegitimate accumulation of wealth. The Scriptures nowhere tell us how much money one can have. In

fact, they lay no prohibition upon the getting of wealth, but only against making wealth the object of one's affections and the end of one's activities. One may have all the money he can get if he gets it honestly, and will use it righteously. Here is the difficulty. There is such a fascination and such a lure about wealth-getting that men have to be very careful lest they come to love money and thereby plant in their souls a root out of which will grow every sort of evil.

This is what has actually happened in the world. Men have become mammon-minded. In every walk of life the modern world is putting so much emphasis upon the getting of wealth that values in our present-day life are measured almost altogether by money. We place a dollars and cents estimate upon men and things. The question constantly asked is, What profit is there in it? We judge men by their bank account, and place and position have much to do with our estimate of individual character. We are, like the rich man in sacred story, too ready to judge our own security by the fulness of our barns.

In the search for wealth we should remember that while we live in a material world, it is, nevertheless, God's world. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Consequently, there are spiritual implications to the getting of wealth. In fact, every material possession is shot through and through with fine spiritual forces. Property and wealth, labor and wages, salary and income,—all

have to do with man's spiritual well-being. All value, of which money is the measure, is in the final analysis spiritual.

Money, wealth, property, place, power are means to an end—that end is the comfort, happiness, and prosperity of all the individuals of society. To secure this end, there should be an unselfish and free operation of economic laws. Business should have the service motive as well as the profit motive. The economic order should be so adjusted that it will be impossible for the wealth of the land to be secured and controlled by a few individuals. God gave man, not one man or a few men, but the whole human family, authority over the earth. The natural resources of the earth, the wealth that God packed into it, are for the benefit of all men. Those who, by their genius, their superior powers or advantages, are fortunate enough to get possession of a superabundance of the things of this world are under obligation to share their good fortune with their fellows;—not necessarily to give what they have to others—that might be injurious instead of helpful—but to make it possible in the administration of the wealth they possess for all who have the energy and a will to work to secure enough of the things of this world to live comfortably and decently.

Think of what modern inventions have meant to the world—the automobile, the radio, electric appliances of all kinds, the airplane, and the many labor-saving devices of the present age which have revolutionized the economic life of the world. They

could have meant much more if the people as a whole had shared equitably in the benefits. A spirit of sharing on an equitable and just basis of merit and service will give a wider distribution of wealth among all the people and thereby make for the prosperity and happiness of all. To have is not to hold, but to give. Unselfishness should characterize the administration of wealth. A Christlike administration of the resources of this earth would give a social and economic order in which there would be no princely fortunes or underprivileged groups—neither favored millionaire nor forced mendicant.

III

No wonder Christ is anxious about the getting and use of money. Money is a mighty power. Economic science, both abstract and applied, deals with the hidden force that pulses at the heart of the nation. Money makers, whether great or small, are directors and users of this hidden power. That there should be restraints thrown around them by society so that the making of money may be kept in a healthy and wholesome condition goes without saying. The engineer who would store up or let loose the power of lightning must pass most rigid tests as to intellectual and moral stability. Witness the electric ordinances of any city. Shall the men who would store up or let loose the almost infinite power of money have no restraints imposed upon them by the society which makes it possible for them to make money? And should God, the

owner of the universe, place no restrictions upon those who would secure and use the wealth which he has stored up in the earth? Surely God cannot nor does he turn over to men the vast wealth of this earth without stipulating the conditions of its use and exacting an accounting for its use.

What does it all signify but this, that the essential content of money is spiritual. The impalpable yet vital force which money contains acts in the economic and social world like electricity in the material world; it becomes a messenger of life or an instrument of death. With unerring swiftness it obeys the hand that releases and directs it. It can render the greatest service or bring about the most ghastly ruin. Money in the hands of a righteous man becomes the agent of Christ. So with a nation. A nation's money may become corrupted by unethical and immoral methods in national administration and, like poisoned blood in the body, may corrupt trade and industry and make them administer to social and economic injustice. On the other hand, a nation's wealth may become the health-giving stream that flows through the channels of trade, making to bloom and fruit the economic life of the nation.

There should be no confusion at this point. Of course, men ought to possess property and money. God himself has given them the earth "for a possession." But ownership is not the same as possession. Possession, or tenure, rightfully belongs to a man; but ownership belongs to God alone. This is Chris-

tian teaching. It should have become the basis of Christian law when Christianity supplanted Roman paganism. But pagan conceptions persisted. The Roman law of property passed bodily into Christian civilization, and the pagan conception of personal ownership has influenced all of us profoundly. The average Christian man, to this day, considers that he owns what he is permitted only to possess.

The first need of a Christian is that he shall think clearly. He must no longer allow himself to remain caught in an old pagan notion of property. When he says, "The earth is the Lord's," he is not using a form of words; he is announcing his faith in a personal God. He thereby separates himself from Hindus, Buddhists, Stoics, and all other pagan people, who, though they may have high conceptions of human morality, are utterly destitute of the one underlying belief which makes one a Christian. Therefore, to apprehend our rightful place in the accumulation of property, we must recognize God and acknowledge his ownership.

IV

Right here we come face to face with one of the big problems in Christian living—namely, how life in the kingdom of heaven can be related to things in the kingdom of earth. It is evident that Jesus came to establish in this world the kingdom of God. The Jews thought that it was to be a political kingdom, with all the pomp and show of worldly power. Many today are coming to think that it is purely

and only a spiritual kingdom, which does not affect material things at all. Both views are wrong.

The kingdom of God is both spiritual and material. It is spiritual in its essence and nature, but material in its expression. The incarnation is a spiritual fact—Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—but the incarnation had to have a physical expression, hence the virgin birth, Jesus of Nazareth, and Calvary. Baptism has a spiritual background and a spiritual meaning, but it is also a physical act. All the graces are spiritual—benevolence, kindness, love, and such like—but they find expression in physical fact. A man sees a helpless orphan and his Christian spirit reacts to its needs and he founds an orphans' home. Men see the great, ghastly, murderous work of the open saloon and their Christian spirit reacts in legislation closing the saloons. And so on with all the great spiritual principles of Christianity. As a spiritual power Christianity roots itself in the hearts and lives of men, but as a conquering agency it operates through men over material things. When thus operated upon, material things become usable for God in kingdom work. Right here the spiritual and the material come together. Through the redeemed individual, the spiritual forces of the kingdom of heaven lay hold upon the wealth of this world and put it into spiritual channels.

This world is in the control of men. They project their personalities, their opinions, their character, and their will clear out to the last particle of it.

They have brought it under their sovereignty and have written out their title deeds to it. Jesus does not question their right of possession, but he does challenge their ownership and the character of their administration. The supreme issue is as to whether God or man shall reign in the realm of things. Jesus appeals to the Christian conscience. He makes the possession of the material things of this world a test of character. Property may be a material thing, but the possession of it by man is a spiritual fact, a point of contact either with God or Satan. This makes all things sacred. It destroys the fictitious distinction between sacred and secular in the realm of things, but it erects a permanent distinction where persons are involved. Only persons are sacred or secular. Money is neither sacred nor secular until it is touched by human fingers, but the minute it is grasped by a human hand it takes on the character of the man who holds it. If a Christian holds it, then it is a divine obligation on him to transform it, by the use he makes of it, into something sacred.

This is not an issue in theology, but an issue in Christian experience. The Christian life which is spiritual extends itself over everything under the control of the Christian clear out to the end of his influence in every direction. This is a fundamental principle in Christian living. If put into practice, it would put the wealth of the Christians of the world at the disposal of Christ in redeeming the world. Here the individual meets his supreme test. No one

can give his soul to Christ without giving him his body also, and he cannot give his body without giving everything controlled by the body. The disciples who first followed Jesus gave both self and substance. With them conversion meant consecration. It was the dynamic within, the Christ life shining through, that impelled them to say that not ought of what they possessed was their own. Here is the highest freedom, a redeemed spirit acting out its own nature under the impulsion of the Christ within. To such a spirit all property is held in trust for God and money receives its spiritual calling. A heavenly character is given to everything that we possess.

IV

Christ would have us organize our lives around the idea of treasures in heaven. We can have things on earth, but earthly things must not be our chief interest; the chief interest must be subject to the lordship of Christ; what we lay up for self must be treasure in heaven.

What are these treasures which we are to lay up in heaven? Look at the things we call treasures, and see which of them we could probably lay up in heaven. It surely cannot be money in its earthly form. There are no banks in heaven in which to deposit earthly gold. It cannot be warehouses, and shops, and ships, and railways. It cannot be stocks and bonds and land and bills receivable. None of these things can be laid up in heaven in their

raw state. All the things which are material must stop this side of heaven. They belong to the earth and with the earth shall pass away.

Neither can we carry out of this world the ambition, the power, the influence, the distinction, the place, nor the position which we may have gained and which we count a treasure. Death is a strainer, and there are many things that men value which are rubbish at the mouth of the grave. They are not permitted to go through. Such are all of this world's dignities.

It must, then, be some sort of property or treasure which can pass the ordeal of death that we are to lay up in heaven. It must be some treasure that we can lay up, not by literal carriage or transfer, not by actually throwing it over into the glory land, but by a sort of transmutation by which it is transformed from the material to the spiritual and is deposited in the bank of glory to our credit.

It is possible to transfer the wealth of this earth to our credit in heaven; to take gold, silver, stocks, bonds, land, cattle, and by transmuting them into the coin of eternity deposit them in the bank of glory to our credit. This is done by putting these things to work for God. One friend said to another, as he stepped into his office: "At work as usual. Do you never rest? Come take an hour off." "Yes," was the reply, "I am at work as usual. I have a great deal to do. I have orphan children to look after; aged ministers to support; bedridden invalids that need my attention; ministers of the gospel who

are looking to me to pay their living expenses while they preach the Christ of salvation to a dying world; missionaries who amid strangers and heathen are telling the story of God's love; colleges to endow; ministerial students to educate; associational missionaries to support; and campaigns for righteousness to push. Yes, I have to be a busy man." The friend exclaimed in surprise, "How do you do all this and look after your business?" "Ah, that is easy, I put my money into the treasury of my church and this church of mine, the divinely appointed agent for a world's evangelization, is engaged in all the things I have mentioned." That man is laying up treasures in heaven.

While we are transmuting our earthly wealth into the wealth of heaven, we are also developing Christian character and becoming rich toward God. The treasures of ambition, influence, honor, power, and distinction, all go to the dust. Men walk as kings to the grave. And oftentimes the first and highest are the meanest and lowest, the moment they step through the portals of death. But not so with the soul when renewed from above. The soul that trusts in Christ, that has come to love the truth, to hate a lie, to be humble, to be longsuffering, to be patient, to be kindly disposed toward others, to be prayerful, to be trustful, to be obedient, and is going about wielding its influence and seeking by word and deed to establish in all the earth the things that are right among men,—that soul will carry through the grave into eternity the graces developed.

Death has no power over such things. The soul is immortal and its words and deeds, when inspired by the love of Christ are immortal also. Men begin life on the other side of the grave where they left off on this side. The soul that is born of God, that loves the truth, that is obedient to Christ and faithful in all the relations of life is laying up treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal. We cannot carry away with us the wealth of this world. But heavenly riches—riches manufactured by turning the wealth of this world into the service of God—are eternal. Thieves cannot reach such wealth. Moth and rust cannot touch it. It is incorruptible, and, what is more, its influence is incorruptible.

X

THE SECRET OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.—

PHILIPPIANS 2:12

One of the dangers of a sacramental system of religion is that it substitutes external observances for spiritual experience and Christlike living. The sacramentarian says, do these things and you will be saved. The whole process is external and mechanical. The Christian believes the teachings of Christ and is drawn naturally into the fellowship of the church, but the Christian life is more than church membership. One becomes a Christian by personal faith in Christ and not through sacraments. Salvation is of God, but it is not without faith in Christ, nor is it without struggle in life. To put sacraments in the place of the delivery of the whole personality to Christ through faith is to build the Christian life on a foundation of sand. There is a warfare to be waged against the wicked world outside of us, and we are to struggle against the tendencies to wrongdoing inside of us. The chanting of the Apostles' Creed as a substitute for sacrificial living makes Christianity too easy.

"I protest," says Huxley, "that if some power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right, on the condition of being turned into, a kind of clock and wound up every

morning, that I would close immediately with the offer." This is the word of a serious-minded man who is voicing the infinite desirability, the infinite difficulty of being good.

Down deep in the heart of every redeemed individual there is the desire to become good, and if on earth there is not some plan whereby Christian character can be developed, then God's supreme gift to the world has been overlooked. But there is a way. Under right conditions it is as natural for the believer to grow a beautiful character as it is for a flower to unfold its petals. In the redemptive work of Christ provision has been made for the disciples of Christ to become good. In the light of the provisions of grace we can say with Browning, "Man was made to grow, not stop"; or in the language of the divine philosopher, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

I

The text gives us a twofold view of the Christian life. At first it seems a paradox. We are told that God is working in the believer to will and to do, and then we are told that the believer is to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. But it is not a paradox at all. The two truths stated here, when kept together, give us the whole truth on Christian living. When separated they furnish the war cry of contending groups who have kept up an age-long theological controversy over the question

of faith and works. One faction in this controversy contends that salvation is in part if not in whole the result of man's efforts who works it out; the other group contends that man's salvation is wholly in God's hands who worketh in man to will and to do.

Neither position is correct. God works in us and we work. Christian character is not made to order. Christianity, as a way to the highest, is planned in heaven, nevertheless as an experience in life it is worked out on earth. To the individual believer it is another word for character. In the world it is the way to a Christlike social order. To both the believer and the world it is the kingdom of God. As believers in Christ we are to work our salvation out into conduct and character. We are to give expression to our faith in words and deeds.

Many honest believers are bewildered by false opinions, false ideas, and false conceptions. They have not come to a true understanding of the Christian life and the means and methods by which the Christian is to succeed in living it. Not understanding the demands made in the Scriptures upon believers and not knowing how to meet these demands, they settle down in religious inactivity convinced that there is no use to try to meet such a high standard of living. They fail because they failed to discover the secret of Christian living.

There are others who think that the Christian life is wrought out by Christ for the believer, and that all one has to do is to receive it. Those who hold this idea live in idleness. "If the Christian life is

wrought out by Christ," they say, "why work it out?" If the Christian character is a matter of divine manufacture, made in heaven like a coat at a tailor's shop and placed upon the individual by the divine hand—a coat of righteousness which one can put on for religious occasions and off when selfish interests demand a rougher garment—if this is the nature of the Christian life, why should anyone worry or work?

These are mistaken ideas growing out of a misconception of the Christian life. Salvation is simply another word for character. It differs from other character developments, not so much by its processes, as by the high sphere in which it is taking place. As believers in Christ, we are to work our salvation out into life. Our religion must be wrought into character and translated into the fabric of human affairs. No man lives to himself alone. Christian character, while it is personal, is also a community and world asset. God working in us "to will and to do" is setting to work the spiritual forces which feed the power lines that furnish the life-giving currents of redeeming grace to the world.

II

The salvation we are to work out is not our justification nor our recommendation to God. It is the translation of an experience of grace, which has taken place in our hearts, into the terms of everyday living, glorified by the highest motives and the most exalted ends. The "fear and the trembling" is not

a bondage of fear, not a fear of the loss of divine love, for the adoption of children prevents such apprehensions and the covenant promises of God in Christ give assurance that no such thing should happen. But it is the fear of an unholy weariness in the tasks of love and a dread lest we should fail of success in living for Christ.

God is working in us to live victoriously, creatively, for Christ. Salvation in its full meaning is the attainment of this high ideal. It is the unfolding, the coming to maturity of the spiritual life. When a child is born he is a human being, but his birth is the beginning and not the end of his existence. So with a Christian. When he is born from above he is saved, but this is the beginning and not the end of the Christian life. He is to work out to its full consummation the life he has in Christ. He is to give himself to the growing of a soul as he gives himself to the growing of a body.

In this work of growing a soul the Christian is not left to his own religious impulses. God works in him to will and to do. This is a gracious provision of grace, for if God did not work, the motives and impulses to Christian living would come only from one's own inner self and would vary in objective with every individual. But with God motivating the soul, every believer is directed along the same great highway of creative living. We thus can have unity in God's world program of redemption. There are tasks of supreme importance for every believer in this program. The social order is to be made

Christlike. The world of mankind is to become one brotherhood living together in peace and working together for the common good. God working in all believers unifies the kingdom forces and gives one divine objective for Christian service.

In growing a Christian life there are two parts: the working in and the working out of God's will. The working in is the divine part. The working out is the human part. We find these same two parts in nature. Take the beehive, what of its mystery? It is not the making of the hive; it is the conceiving of it. If you can tell me how the bee got the idea I will tell you how he worked it out. The thing which wakes my wonder is the instinct—the process within the bee. God worketh in the bee both to will and to do. So is it with the soul of man. Every Christian is building a character which is Christlike. How is he to get the idea? Where is he to get the impulse? The impulse comes from God. God worketh in him both to will and to do.

This is something peculiar to the Christian religion. The great religions of the world—Hindooism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and all the great ethnic faiths—stress the human will. The keynote of these religions is, work for your salvation. They teach that the power that saves you is yourself, the chains that bind you are of your own forging, the virtue that delivers you is of your own manufacture, and the grace that redeems you is your own merit. The Christian religion is different. The Christian's

God loves the sinner and goes out to seek and to save him. The human will is acted upon directly by the Holy Spirit, who, after regenerating the soul, comes into the life to inspire and guide. The regenerated heart is the homing place of the Spirit of God. Like the sun which warms the earth and kindles the living germ in the seed, causing them to sprout and grow, so does the Holy Spirit warm the heart, kindle to activity the will, and cause the Christian to produce in his life the rich fruits of righteousness.

III

It is encouraging to know that salvation is of God. From him comes the desire by which we long for it, the grace by which we attain it, and the power by which we live it. All is of grace. He gives grace for grace, not grace for good works. Consider the strength which this truth bestows. The one in whom we trust and to whom we look is not a guide outside of us, but a God within us. He is not one who can teach us when we are willing to hear, but one who works within us creating righteous desires and impulses in the soul. We do not have to persuade him to help us; but it is his good pleasure to work in us both to will and to do. But let no one think that because salvation is of God the believer has nothing to do. There is work, severe work, work so great that the worker needs and must have the power of the Holy Spirit. We are to work out the whole of our salvation to its complete and full consummation.

With the new birth Christian living begins. The soul that is born from above is to be "transformed, by the renewing of the mind, so as to prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." This transformation is produced in a twofold way: by growth in grace, in which the mind is renewed and made like unto the mind of Christ; and by obedience to the commands of Christ, in which the will becomes subject to the will of God. These two processes are simultaneous. They are closely related and yet separate. The one, growth in grace, is the spontaneous unfolding of the Christ life received in the new birth; the other, obedience to Christ, is the response of the human will to the divine impulse as God works within the soul to will and to do. These two spiritual processes, properly understood and properly related, will give the secret of Christian living.

Growth in grace can be hindered or helped by the individual as he co-operates with or fails to co-operate with the means of grace, but the impulse to grow is one of the things nature holds in her own keeping; it is mysterious and effortless. The act of growing is automatic, spontaneous, without fretting, and without thinking. This is true in all spheres; applied to plants, to animals, to the body, or to the soul, this is the law. A doctor may tell us how growth may be stunted or helped, but the impulse to grow is not affected, only the results. The physician of souls, in like manner, may prescribe more earnestness, more prayer, more Bible reading, more

Christian work; these things will create conditions favorable to growth, but the soul grows because of the spiritual life within it and the act of growing is without trying, without fretting, without thinking. Manuals of devotion with complicated rules for growing in grace would do well to return to the simplicity of nature; and earnest souls who are attempting spiritual development by struggle instead of by faith, would be spared much unnecessary effort if they would simply trust implicitly in Christ and leave the soul to grow by its own inherent spiritual impulse.

Some may raise an objection to this on the ground that it takes away all conflict from the Christian life. But those who raise this objection confuse growth in grace with working out one's salvation. The two things are different, and the difference lies in the balance between faith and works.

In the physical life we never think of connecting the growth of a boy with the work he does. Work, in fact, is one thing and growth is another. If it is asked, Is the Christian wrong in agonizing efforts after growth? The answer is, Let him agonize to live right, and growth will take care of itself. When a boy runs a race or does a piece of work, he does not say, "This will help me to grow." It may or it may not, but if he is doing these things in order to grow he has quite a mistaken idea of growth. His anxiety here is altogether misplaced. What he should be anxious about is the quality of his work

and his faithfulness in it; nature will take care of growth.

In the spiritual life the same law holds. We are to work with all our might, but not to force nor to secure spiritual growth; growth is spiritual and spontaneous. We do not work as a necessary means to growth; we are taken in hand. We do not plan; we are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Let us live right, think right, act right, study the Word, keep our hearts attuned to prayer, rest in perfect trust and forget about our spiritual growth; the newborn life will do its own growing.

IV

The question may be asked, if God works in us, why should we work? Is there no such thing as inspiration? When the child is working and the mother stands in the door and says, "Bravely done, my child," is there no new light in the eye? Is there no alacrity added to the hand? Is there no ambition stirred to do better? Does not the mother work in the child to will and to do, and does not the child co-operate with the mother's will by carrying out her wishes?

In the midst of battle, men who have unflinchingly fought until they are well-nigh cut off and are thinking of retreat, are nerved to renewed effort by the voice of their commander crying out

to them and sending a shout of victory through the air as did the Confederate commander when he shouted to his men, "Look, there stands Jackson like a stone wall!" Inspired by that voice, they are nerved with fresh energy, and with a new surge of effort they go on to victory. That success is the result of another mighty soul working in them, inspiring them to will and to do.

A wandering, weary, spent, hungry traveler sits down, benumbed, to give up in despair. He is met by a hunter. Is his weariness cured? Is the cold dissipated? Is his hunger satisfied? No. But the hunter says to him: "Arise, my man. Pull yourself together. Follow me. And now you shall not wander in circles, and in vain. I know the way; and if you will make another effort you will be safe." The hunter works in the man to will and to do. He brings him out of danger.

These are imperfect illustrations, for the ones who work to bring new life and enthusiasm cannot get on the inside of the ones they are influencing. But blessed be God, there is a Spirit who works within the believer, who develops a power within the soul and who guides to successful living. This is the gracious provision of divine grace. They who fall back into indifference and selfishness are without this comfort; but those who realize their privileges and avail themselves of this divine help are under the administration of a Father who loves them better than they love themselves, and who is working intelligence and inspiration and purpose in them,

who will by and by complete in them the glorious work of emancipation from sin, bring them into his power and love and give to them the joy and victory of the upper kingdom.

This does not in any way supersede or violate man's freedom. God respects our integrity as rational and responsible creatures. He works within us the impulse to righteousness, but any action to be wrought into character must have the stamp of the will upon it. Aspirations may come up in the soul, righteous desires may clamor for recognition, and holy impulses may tug at the door of your will and mine, but these will have no currency in your life and mine unless they are caught up by the will and wrought into deeds. Take obedience, for instance. How do we come to obey the law of love? It is by practicing submission to the will of Christ. So is it with sympathy, humility, gentleness, kindness, generosity. No one, just because he is converted, has all the graces of the Christian life. These things are worked out in obedience to the inner impulses which come from God. If we ever come to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, to do unto others as we would have them to do unto us, to have the spirit of benevolence, to give of our substance as the Lord has prospered us for the ongoing of his kingdom, to develop in our individual character the Christian graces, it will be because we have practiced these things in the actual experiences of life. God is working in us to will and to do these things, but they will become actual elements of char-

acter only when the stamp of our will is put upon them and they are made our own habits of conduct.

Let us suppose that we have an organ which is a conscious thing with a will of its own. Here are all the keys with their possibilities of matchless and almost unlimited combinations of harmony. At the keyboard sits a master. He touches its keys. The organ feels the impulse to wonderful harmony but it closes its mouth. It says: "I will not respond to the touch of the master. He is working in me to will and to do of his own good pleasure. His purpose is exalted. Matchless harmony will result if I obey the impulse he has created, but I will not." Under such conditions music would be impossible. The organ must respond to the will of the master at the keyboard.

At the keyboard of your life and mine sits a Master—Christ, the Son of the living God—and he is touching the keys of your life and mine as it pleases him, working in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. But unless you and I respond to that touch, harmony is impossible. The matchless combinations of tone can only be secured in your life and mine when we work together with God.

V

The development of Christian character is little by little. As the individual obeys the higher laws and works in response to the inner divine impulse in the development of permanent habits of living, he is changed into the likeness of Christ. We do not

spring full-fledged into maturity with all the elements of righteousness full-formed. But day by day, week by week the elements of strength and righteousness are built up. This is the process by which God works in nature. An orchard does not spring full-fledged into fruitage the day of its planting. It takes time. The trees are cultivated and they grow. When the springtime comes they bloom and then the fruit matures and ripens. So it is with character. We put off the old man with his deeds; we put on the new man with his habits. Unbelief is replaced by faith, disobedience by obedience, and sin and unrighteousness by right doing. Those who fail in the Christian life are those who fail to recognize this law of spiritual development. They either fail to obey the inner impulses, or else grow weary and fall by the wayside, because the Christian character cannot be formed in a day.

In working out our personal salvation we work out also the salvation of the social order in which we live. While every man's life is a private affair, it also belongs to the community and to the world. No one lives to himself alone. As Tennyson says, "I am a part of all that I have met." It is as men come in contact with their fellows, as soul touches soul, and life reacts upon life that the social order is established and civilization is given its character. How shall this order be changed? Christian living by individuals alone can change it. The social order will become Christlike when the men who compose the social order live Christly lives. This Christ

knew; hence he did not give instruction for the re-organization of the state. He set himself to make men over. Changed men will change the world. Christian living by Christian people is the only hope of changing the social order of the world.

XI

A CUP OF COLD WATER

Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water . . . shall in no wise lose his reward.—MATTHEW 10:42

It is a human disposition to depreciate and undervalue little things. Men try to see big all the time. It is the stupendous that attracts their attention. They are constantly making an effort to break records, to run faster, to swim farther, to fly higher, and to build bigger than anyone else in all the world has done before. This disposition causes men to depreciate small services. The one who simply does the ordinary thing is unnoticed. Because of this attitude the small things, the little kindnesses that might be rendered to our fellows as we pass along the highway of life are neglected. We overlook opportunity after opportunity to do little deeds of kindness, to speak a word of good cheer, to lend a helping hand, to lift just a little bit on the load that weighs our brother down. It is not because we do not want to help; it is because we are deceived by the illusion that the little which we might do is not worth the doing.

Not only is this true, but we assume an air of indifference and are disposed to ignore the small deeds of kindness we might do each day. As a result, our hearts grow cold toward little things, and

if someone turns aside to do us a small favor we acknowledge it with a thank you that is entirely perfunctory and void of all emotion of gratitude. We actually sometimes make the doer feel that it would have been just as well if he had left the kindness undone.

We carry this spirit into our religious life. It is the big thing for Christ that we are always trying to do, while the little things which are at our hands ready all the time to be done escape our notice. These little things slip into the non-value column and are pushed aside as worthless. The tragic thing about it is that we come to think, if we cannot find something big to do, that it is not worth while to try to do anything at all, and, as a result, many Christians fall into the ranks of the useless and cumber the ground rather than help the Lord.

I

Christ tells us that "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple" shall receive his reward. The term he uses is "little ones." This is a term of his own choosing. The world called his followers "disciples," but Christ called them "little ones."

There are several reasons why Christ uses this term. He may be talking about doing an ordinary service to an ordinary disciple, and not to one extraordinarily endowed. Or he may be referring to the fact that his disciples will be in all ages more or

less despised and persecuted and will, therefore, be as helpless "little ones." The term is, however, an expression of personal endearment and is designed to show that the humblest of the disciples is as precious to Christ as the "little ones" in the home are precious to the mother. They are the ones who would not, because of any position they held among men, call forth a service of patronage, but on the other hand are ordinary, everyday Christians. The "little ones" to whom Christ is referring are the ones we meet on the street, our everyday associates in the ordinary affairs of life; the ones who are in need, who sit by the roadside and wearily wait for words of encouragement and hope. We do not have to turn aside from our regular daily program to render these little acts of kindness. Right at our hand, right by our pathway, all along the highway of life are these "little ones" to whom we can, in the name of a disciple, give at least a cup of cold water.

Christ makes this service very personal. He is thinking of these "little ones" as individuals and not as a group or a class. The service we are to render is a personal service. That is, we are to give the cup of cold water to an individual, with our own hands and not through an agent of any kind.

Perhaps the reason we are no happier in our religious life is because we do so little personal service. There is danger of becoming institutionalized. This kind of thing will ultimately dry up the fountains of our religious sympathy, devotion, energy, and joy.

There is something in us which demands specific objects of care and attention. If we would be developed in religious experience and secure the largest amount of happiness in the religious life, we must do personal service. Sympathy is developed by expressing it not to suffering humanity in general, but to suffering persons. Charity is cultivated in the same way. Religious enthusiasm, devotion, and activity are developed by the same kind of personal service. Men must have something specific to do.

So Christ calls us to personal service. He calls us to serve our fellows as an expression of our love to him as well as to them, knowing that by this service our love for him and for them is intensified. The giving of a cup of cold water is a personal act done for an individual and has in it the elements that enrich the giver's life, as well as quenching the thirst of a famished soul.

II

Christ extends the scope of Christian service so as to include the smallest deed of kindness one can do. If anyone shall "give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only," that one is rendering a service to Christ and "shall in no wise lose his reward." Christ in his teaching about service picks up the simple little kindnesses which men call commonplace and glorifies them. What is more ordinary, more simple than giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul? There is nothing said about going out of one's way to render this service. There is nothing said about sacrifice made to get the water.

There is no effort made to hunt up the soul that is thirsty. It is simply the act of dipping down into the spring which nature has furnished and dipping up a brimming cupful of cool, refreshing water and giving it to a thirsty soul. Simple, ordinary, everyday, commonplace service. Anyone can do it. Education, training, refinement, social position, wealth—none of these supposedly necessary things as an equipment for service is necessary.

What a simple service it seems to be, and yet when we think into the heart of what Christ is teaching it is not so simple as it seems; it is the most profound philosophy. Is he not telling us that our service is to reach every human need, no matter how simple that need may be? Here is where we fail in our thinking. We have somehow come to think that the service of Christ is limited to certain things. One must hold some position, or do some task, or go some place if he would serve Christ.

Few men have the opportunity and the ability to do great things. There has been only one Luther, one Calvin, one John Knox, one John Wesley, one Spurgeon. Such great servants as these come not in droves; only one to a generation or one to a continent. But think of the thousands who helped Luther put over the Reformation, who helped Calvin launch his system of doctrines, who helped John Knox redeem and save Scotland, who helped John Wesley organize and build the Methodist church, who helped Spurgeon come into his own as a world preacher. All these thousands were the ones who

gave "the cup of cold water." All men cannot be missionaries, or devote the whole of their time to special work in the Master's vineyard. Only a few members of the church can hold official positions. There are only a few places for teachers and singers and deacons and ushers and officers in the various departments of the church, but in God's kingdom the doors are down and the world is wide open for everyone to give a cup of cold water.

This is a field where all can serve. Most Christians are occupied in some kind of pursuit and have to work for their daily bread. They can give only a portion of their means and only a part of their time. They can give no more because they have no more to give. But everyone can do little things; and there are a hundred little things round about them all the time that they can do—things crying to be done. In one of the greatest of his poems Wordsworth speaks of these things as,

That best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.

III

Not only so, but Christ is reminding us that our best service to mankind is the "cup of cold water,"—the little things that come to enrich experience and sweeten character. In the halcyon days of youth we dream of life's supreme prizes and picture to ourselves the goal of our dreams as the attainment of place, position, wealth, fame, power. But as the

years go by and our hearts become richer in the real experiences of life we find that the things we have ambitioned for have no relation to genuine blessedness at all. We sacrifice our peace of mind and strangle our divinest longings to attain these earthly things only to find that after we have secured them they leave us hungry and haggard as ever. Where do we find life's richest joys? It is in "the cup of cold water" which quenches thirst and not in the spiced wine which creates it. Yea, real joy and happiness are found in life's simple things—health, work, friendship, the caress of little children, and love that puts its hand in yours—God's simple gifts; these "cups of cold water" are life's most perfect gifts.

One is surprised as he goes through the epistles of Paul at the number of obscure people whom he mentions as having ministered to his refreshment. "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." "I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus." These were all subordinate people, their names are linked with no great exploits, but they gave cups of cold water to the great apostle and kept his spirit strong. Right out here all around us there are hungry hearts, there are discouraged souls, there are struggling individuals fighting battles that we know nothing about, and in the heat of it all they are begrimed and thirsty and blood-stained, and they need the ministry of little things to give courage to their fagging

spirits. Just a word might save a life. Shall we not give the cup of cold water?

We can all extend a glad hand to our fellows in the grip of which hand we can express the warmth of friendship and brotherly love. You may say, Oh, there is nothing to that, but that trembling soul out there which is pining for the touch of a friendly hand knows better. To him it is the "cup of cold water" that quenches the thirst of a hungry heart. We can drop into that sick room yonder where there is discouragement and despondency because the head of the house, the stay of the family has lost his earning power and the wife does not know how the little ones are going to be fed, and by a few enheartening words and a little bit of optimism and faith out of our own heart, we may do more for the recovery of that man than all the medicine of the doctor. Do not call this a little thing. It is the "cup of cold water" that brings vigor and life back into the discouraged soul.

Here is a fine young fellow with all the prospects of life lying out before him, and all the stuff of life vital in his soul, but he is losing his way. By the simple word, "My boy, I believe in you," we turn that life into the channels of noble achievement. A little thing, yea, but it is the "cup of cold water" that brings soul refreshment at the right time; it is the salvation of a life.

No one can tell what any small act may mean. Men have been saved by the grasp of a hand, by a gentle word, by a generous deed. A bunch of flow-

ers in a dingy apartment may start memories which will mean the resurrection and redemption of a soul. A tear or a smile has done for some spirits in the prison of sorrow what the wealth of the Indies could not have done. A ray of sunshine from some bright life may cast a rainbow upon the sky for some forlorn sufferer. No, one cannot tell what a kind deed may do though it be ever so small. A mother who had lost a son in the surf on the North Shore because the night was dark and he could not tell that his boat was near the reefs, placed a small lamp in the window which looked out to the sea each night. It was a little light, oh, how little, but glimmering through the darkness it warned many a sailor and saved many a ship and many a life.

And why should we not do these little things? They lie at our very door. The streets are crowded with opportunities for services of this kind. Oh, my friends, disciples of the Lord Jesus, would you not look upon this field where grow the richest fruits? Is your soul languishing for the meat of the Master? Have you been feeding on the husks that swine do eat and wondering why you are not satisfied? Do you want to know why there is such a longing in your heart? Perhaps it is because you have failed to give the "cup of cold water" to the hungry hearts around you.

IV

Christ tells us that this service is to be rendered in the name of a disciple, or, as Mark has it, because

you are Christ's. It is this fact that makes it a Christian act. The gift of a cup of cold water is worthy and beautiful, or unworthy and mean, according to the motive which inspires it.

No service in itself is small,
None great though earth it fill,
But that is small which seeks its own,
That great which does God's will.

The true value of service is to be measured by its motive. Christian service must have a Christian motive. You may give your goods to feed the poor, and your body to be burned, but if you have not love it will profit you nothing. There is no profit in any service however great the sacrifice may be, if it is not done from the right motive.

This cuts down close to where we live. What makes any service Christian? What gives moral value to what we do? Just one thing: it must be done in the name and for the sake of Christ. It is a little thing, and may be a valueless thing, to give a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul; but when that cup of cold water is given in the name and for the sake of Christ, the action is raised into the moral sphere; a common deed becomes an uncommon service. Let us put this test to all Christian service. Sunday school teachers, are you teaching for the sake of Christ? Deacons, are you serving for the sake of Christ? Choir members, are you singing to the glory of God and for the sake of Christ? If you are, your reward shall not pass away; if you

are not, there is little if any Christian value to you in your service. This is simply making Christ first in our lives. Christ is to be regnant in our lives in all things. Whether we are speaking a word of good cheer to a brother as we meet him on the street, whether we are helping some unfortunate one, or whether we are going about our daily duties, the love of Christ is to motivate us.

When Edgar Payson was dying, he said: "I love to give in Christ's name a full cup of happiness to every human being." If with this urgency of desire every disciple of Christ would daily go out among men, what changes would be wrought in human society! The daily lives of Christians—the giving of food to the needy, clothes to the naked, a toy to a child, opportunity for work to the unemployed, a good book to one who would prize it as the thirsty do water—would in these simple ways cause streams of refreshing water to flow through life's desert plains.

A woman came to her pastor one morning after he had spoken on heaven, and said: "Pastor, you forgot to tell us where heaven is. Where is heaven?" The pastor said: "My dear sister, right over there on that hill is a needy family. The mother is sick. The father is dead. The children are hungry. The oldest one should be in school, but cannot go for lack of books and clothes. Go over there and help that family in Jesus' name and see if you do not find where heaven is." That is it, the heaven of

bliss for the Christian is right out there on the other side of deeds of mercy in Jesus' name.

If you are sighing for a lofty work,
If great ambitions dominate your mind,
Just watch yourself and see you do not shirk
The common little ways of being kind.

If you are dreaming of a future goal,
When crowned with glory men shall own your power,
Be careful that you let no struggling soul
Go by unaided in the present hour.

If you are moved to pity for the earth,
And long to aid it, do not look so high;
You pass some poor dumb creature faint with thirst.
All life is equal in the eternal eye.

If you would help to make the wrong things right,
Begin at home: there lies a lifetime's toil.
Weed out your garden fair for all men's sight,
Before you plan to till another's soil.

God chooses His own leaders in the world,
And from the rest He asks but willing hands,
As mighty mountains into place are hurled,
While patient tides may only shape the sands.*

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

V

Christ tells us that this service shall in no wise go without its reward. The expression is a very strong one. The literal reading is: "His reward shall in no wise perish." This indicates that these little kindnesses will continue to enrich the life of the one who performs them. There is also a hint here of the

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lasting crown of glory given to the Christian on the crowning day for the little deeds of kindness done on earth to Christ's little ones.

There is nothing so enriching to the character as doing deeds of kindness to Christ's little ones. Every deed of love done in the name of a disciple, every work of mercy prosecuted for Christ's sake, every gift bestowed for the advancement of the kingdom of heaven expands the heart, enlarges the sympathies, and deepens the source of joy in the heart of the doer. Every sermon the preacher delivers, every lesson the Sunday school teacher teaches, every song the choir sings imparts the grace of God to the heart of the preacher, the teacher, the singer, and makes more precious the truths of the gospel. The deed reacts in blessings upon the doer. The rich life is the life filled with deeds of kindness and love for Christ.

"The Vision of Sir Launfal," by James Russell Lowell, glows with the glory of the right motives. Sir Launfal was a knight of the North Countree who went in search of the Holy Grail. In spotless armor he set forth from his castle on his righteous quest. At the gate sat a leper who begged and moaned. The spotless knight loathed in his heart this filthy creature and haughtily tossed him a coin. Years passed by and at last Sir Launfal, old and gray, returns from his quest to find his heir installed in his place. Unknown he is turned away from his own door, and as he sits outside the gate musing he hears once more the leper's voice, "For Christ's sweet sake, I

beg an alm." The knight turns to the sound and sees the leper cowering by his side, lone and white:

And Sir Launfal said,—“I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,—
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,—

.
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through Him, I give to thee!

He broke his single crust of bread and gave to the leper and then he took his helmet and from the stream brought water for him to drink. Then, lo! a wondrous transformation took place:

The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,

.
And the voice that was softer than silence said,
Lo, it is I, be not afraid!

Thus with the true instinct of a prophet, did Lowell portray the right motive in service. When Sir Launfal in scorn tossed the bit of gold to the leper, the Holy Grail was far, far away from the seeker, but when he shared his crust with the leper in the name of Christ, he found what he sought. So shall it be with us.

XII

ROOM TO LIVE

Thou hast set my feet in a large place.—PSALM 31:8

There comes down to us from the remote past the story of a diabolical and ingenious form of torture which an Eastern monarch is said to have inflicted upon the unfortunate subjects of his displeasure. The method of this torture was to place the hapless victim in a revolving chamber, the sides of which, as it turned, gradually came together. The ill-fated culprit locked in this chamber of doom watched in helpless dismay the walls of his cell as they came slowly in and, hopeless and helpless, was at last crushed between the contracting walls of stone—a ghastly process.

This gruesome story, whether true or not, illustrates with cruel accuracy what is constantly taking place in life. Men and women are subjecting themselves to contracting influences which, like this revolving room, come in upon them with blighting and destroying effect. With seeming unconcern they pull the firmament down and the horizon in upon themselves until, like the gathering gloom of coming night, the shadows of limitation envelop them.

This would not be so tragic if it were not avoidable. If men's lives were fixed by fate, then we might sympathize with but should not censure those

who fail. This, however, is not the case. There is no evil genie, or good genie either as for that matter, who with pen of destiny writes an address upon the soul and, having fixed its destination, drops it into a particular pouch in the postal system of the universe for delivery. Man is not a parcel-post package. He is not a special delivery letter. He is a living soul endowed with the power of self-determination. Thus endowed he is superior to the world of matter and things. Thus endowed and having access to divine love, grace, and power, he is able by divine help to beat back the destroying forces of evil, to triumph over the belittling influences that environ him, and to make for himself a constantly enlarging place in which to live.

I

There are agencies and influences always operating—currents in social, political, economic, intellectual, and spiritual life—whose nature is to reduce, contract, shrivel up and make small one's living place. The psalmist says, "I cried unto the Lord in my distress, and the Lord answered me and set my feet in a large place." The implication is that the psalmist was in the grip of forces that circumscribed his life, and his soul was distressed. The Lord came to his relief and lifted him out of his straited place and set his feet in the wide-open spaces. Life was made over by the new vision that came to his soul from the upward look. He was

lifted out of his littleness. We, too, must be lifted out of the way of little things if we would find a large place in which to live.

One of these belittling things is a low keynote, an off pitch in life's harmonies. One of the major problems of life is its dominant note, its central issue, its great first thing. In the harmonic scheme of moral things there is a high note and a low note; a heavenly tone and an earthly tone. Right here life centers itself. The note on which the life is pitched will affect the whole scale of being; it will give pitch and tone to the whole life in every octave of thought and action. If the tonic key is right the tones are present and in their place, and the upper harmonies will ring true. The life that is keyed to a high note will ring clear and pure and sweet; the life that is keyed to a low note will ring low both in its ethical standards and moral outlook. No life is properly keyed that is not Christocentric.

It is a supreme tragedy for the major key of life to be tuned to the wrong pitch. All life is then out of harmony, all the issues are out of proportion, all the experiences are in a tangle, all the tasks are in confusion. History is replete with illustrations of men who have staggered and fallen because they tuned in to the wrong key. Men of genius have gone out in despair because they have tuned their lives to the wrong note. It is no more possible to bring strength and beauty and bigness to a life with a false keynote than to have perfect harmony with a false tone.

Some of these low notes are hatred, malice, prejudice, deceit, revenge, resentment, cruelty, craftiness, cynicism, cowardice, enmity, impiety, immorality, intemperance, grouchiness, lawlessness, and selfishness. In all the walks of life—in business, in politics, and in the professions—we find individuals tuned in to one or more of these low tones and almost without exception they have low ideas and ideals, bad habits, and vulgar tastes. They are more or less at war with things that are high and right and true and good. They stand for things that are low and base and mean. They sound always a discordant note and voice a call to ways that are wild and to paths that are crooked. They swell the ranks of the dissatisfied, the disgruntled, the commonplace. They are the human failures either cast up on the shore or left floating as derelicts on life's unfriendly sea.

I am thinking now of two young men who entered college the same year. One of them caught step with the spirit of high things in college life. His attitude was fine, his spirit was fine, his conduct was fine. He was a straightforward, manly chap. He came to get the best the college had, and he got it. The other young man tuned into a low note. He bummed his way through classes. He ran with the rowdy set. He fell into step with the campus Bolsheviks. He was critical, recalcitrant, difficult. What was the outcome? The one who tuned into the high note in college life became an honored citizen, representing his district in the Congress of the

United States. The other, who tuned into a low note in campus life, became a second-class attorney eking out a bare living. The one made a great place in which to live; the other narrowed his living quarters to a small space.

There are high notes and bright notes and joyous notes and glad notes and thrilling notes and strong notes and constructive notes and mighty notes—all pitched in the major key. Tune into these high notes. If a man tunes his life into a bright and joyous note, there will be sunshine and gladness, laughter and joy, springtime and flowers, friendship and love, hopefulness and helpfulness all through life. If a man's life is keyed to the high notes of strength, constructiveness, energy, and power, his life will be characterized by constructive thinking, progressive planning, and permanent building. Tune in to these high and mighty notes and the music of life will be classic; there will be room to live.

Another set of agencies that limit the living quarters of the soul is contracting sympathies and narrow and selfish views of life. We come now to the field of the emotions where the gentler graces grow. A kindly disposed heart in its wider fruition produces a crop of great things: it grows the fruit of love, friendship, kindness, tenderness, helpfulness, confidence, and generosity. What a wideness and broadness and bigness these things give to life! But, oh, the tragedy when in the place of sympathy and unselfishness there are growing the noxious weeds of contracting sympathies, narrow and selfish views

and belittling prejudices! How these things will make small the space in which to live! There is no room for the soul where there is no kindness and tenderness and helpfulness. The one who shuts these things out of his life shuts the door to the wider and bigger spaces; he shuts himself out of the wide-open latitude of the highest freedom.

There are self-imprisoned lives. The dungeons are not built in a day, but every day by what he thinks and does the builder adds to the thickness of the walls of his prison and strengthens its power to confine. The principal ingredient in the prison walls of the self-imprisoned soul is selfishness. Selfishness is bondage. It exudes a deposit which seals up the sympathies and discernments of the soul. It checks and contracts the finer relationship of life and destroys the finer communions until at last all the active, sensitive powers of the life are shut up in a heart of stone. Selfishness will do this and more. It will quench the spirit of compassion, close the channels of generosity, turn the energies in upon self and shrivel every noble impulse. It dungeons the soul and shuts out both God and man.

The most potent of all the agencies operating to reduce life to a narrow area is sin. Sin is the great tragedy of human life. It contracts and kills; it shrivels and destroys. It is deep-seated in human nature. There is the inherited weakness and the encircling contagion within us, the evil tendency; without us, the unhallowed opportunity; and the two brought together mean tragedy. When a man

accepts the passing solicitation of evil, or yields to the hothanded grip of passion, there is always afterward a lowered self-respect; he measures life and finds that he has fewer square feet on which to stand.

Sin is a subtraction from man's capital in life. There is no rebate, no recoup. Days that are sinned away and possibilities that are squandered in dissipation and wickedness are gone, and gone forever. Sin is a fatal thing. Every foul thought blackens the heart. Every evil habit tightens its clutches about the throat of the spirit. Every unclean act deadens the accuracy of spiritual sensitiveness. Every step on the downward road takes the soul farther on into the regions of despair. Sin continued means dulled senses, sluggish reactions, deadened nerves, careless thinking, lowered ideals, vitiated vitality, lessened life. Every conscious wrong act leaves a scar. Every sin seams the soul. Every step in wickedness is a sure step into a smaller place in which to live.

Two young men stood before the court. Just inside the railing sat two mothers sobbing and two fathers with heads bowed in silent grief. The charge was murder. These two young men had shot down ruthlessly and wantonly another young man who was unarmed and who made no resistance, and now the self-confessed murderers stood before the court to receive their sentence. "Ninety-nine years," solemnly spoke the judge, "take charge of the prisoners, Mr. Sheriff." They were led away. They had

made for themselves, through sin and wrongdoing, a very small place in which to live.

This is a symbol of the end of every godless life. The soul shrinks, the eyes dim, the powers are dulled; a wasted life passing out by degrees till the last spark of the smoking flax snuffs out and the burned out soul stands before the Judge of all the earth to receive its sentence. "Depart," says the Judge. And the soul goes out into the darkness, out with the refuse of the universe; this is the second death. What a little place in which to live!

II

It is not enough, however, simply to resist the contracting influences of life; we must also enlarge the area of living. It is here that we come into the higher values. Life is a great adventure. To live is the supreme function of the creature. The mere lapse of years is not life. To eat, to drink, to sleep, this is not life. If this is all, the deeper functions of the soul are not awakened; the sanctities slumber which make it worth while to be. Knowledge, truth, love, beauty, goodness, faith,—these alone can give vitality to the mechanism of existence. The laughter of mirth that vibrates through the heart; the tear that freshens the dry waste within; the music that brings childhood back; the prayer that calls the future near; the doubt that makes us meditate; the hardship that forces us to struggle,—these are the things that enrich and sweeten life. To live means to think, to feel, to plan, to create. He who

thinks the noblest, whose mental horizon extends the farthest, whose intellectual vision is the brightest, and whose spiritual experiences are the richest, lives the most, the biggest, and the best.

If one would have the biggest and widest place in which to live, he must extend the horizon of his life and widen the floor-space of his living quarters. Let us push out the wall of our living room and add vision to the floor plan of our lives. No man comes into a big place in which to live by some mystical force that lifts him above the facts of life and makes him independent of nature's laws and the daily detail of human affairs. Men grow by seeing things and by organizing their powers and directing their lives so as to be prepared for every contingency and ready for every opportunity. This means that we must see things as they really are. There are not many men who can look at a thing and really see it. Most men see their own ideas projected upon the surface of things; they see what they want to see, or what they fear to see. There are people who set their clocks wrong to fool themselves; and there are some who set their thinking wrong with the same intent. It takes courage to face facts, but courage is one of the fundamental elements of a big life; this is fundamental.

Vision is essential to progress. The power by which one images the things he wishes to do and the processes their doing necessitates is fundamental. The progress of the race centers here. No great thing was ever done that was not first visioned by some-

one. Steam and electricity with all their multifold applications in the industrial life of today were first seen by someone with a telescopic mind. The sewing machine, the cotton gin, the telephone, the automobile, the airplane, the radio and every other modern invention and labor-saving device civilization has produced were first visioned by someone. Not only so, but every piece of literature, every architectural design, every great painting, and every piece of music that enriches the thought and the cultural life of the world—all things made by man and done by man since first the morning stars sang together over the creation of a new world—were first visioned by someone who had pushed out the walls of his habitation and enlarged the horizon of his life.

Not only so, but man's behavior, all the actions of his life, his tidiness, cleanliness, manner of eating, walking, talking, dressing, expressions of the face, voice and language,—these are all merely outward expressions, copies of the images he has in his soul. How important that one's images be correct! The power to image is the big thing, for on it hangs the character as well as the wideness of one's horizon in the field of achievement. The increase of the power to image is an increase in mental ability. It is not enough simply to get facts; get the power of vision, the power to create images, for this is necessary to an enlarged horizon.

Push out also the wall of your living room and give to yourself the breadth and wideness of big ideas. The capacity to think is a supreme en-

dowment. Herein lies one of the elements of man's majesty. Thinking, however, amounts to little if it is not big. Go into the library of the world's literature—it is a stupendous museum of preserved thought—but it is the massiveness of the ideas preserved that gives this literature its weight and value. The idea of *Hamlet* made Shakespeare the prince of dramatists. The idea of *Paradise Lost* made Milton a great poet. The spirit of John Bunyan yet walks the earth in the idea of his heaven-bound pilgrim in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

We need the tonic of big ideas. In a memorable passage toward the close of his history, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Gibbon describes the triumph of the massive masterpieces of Roman architecture. The Huns and the Goths and the Vandals had done their worst. The city of Rome had been sacked again and again. Everything had been destroyed that was destructible. There remained, because they were indestructible, the towering columns and the colossal arches. These defied the hand of the destroyer. The big things remained. So is it with big ideas; they remain. The shock of the changing times and tides of men affect them not.

Ideas have a tendency to crack open and split up the casing of the mind so that there will be more room for thinking. They do this in three ways: they push out the walls of our thinking; they make deeper and higher our thinking; they transform and make new the character of our thinking. This will keep us from drifting into small things—small anxi-

eties, small pleasures, and small talk. A few big ideas driven into the crevices of the brain and watered with thought will, when they swell, crack open the mind and let something new in.

A few summers ago I spent my vacation in the mountains of New Mexico, and while there I saw where a scrub oak had rooted itself in a crevice on the side of a solid rock cliff and in the processes of its growth had split off a hundred thousand tons of rock from the mountainside. There the rock lay at the foot of the cliff rotting under the corroding touch of sunshine and snow and rain and forming fresh, fertile soil for flower and fern and forest tree. A few growing ideas might shiver the shell of our thinking and furnish fresh soil for new mental processes.

Big ideas are the gifts of God as well as wheat fields, and vineyards, and other fruits of the earth. The mind may be likened unto a rich, fertile field. Sow it down with the golden seed from the treasure house of divine truth and under God's care the harvest will be a life worth carrying up to the judgment seat of Christ. But if the seeds of selfishness and sin be sown, the harvest will be the little grain of mischief, misery, and miserliness. Big ideas are good ideas. Plant these in the mind and under the warm sunshine of divine love and grace there will be a rich fruitage in largeness of life.

We can enlarge our living place by pushing out the wall of ignorance and adding knowledge. There is nothing so expensive as ignorance; it dwarfs the

soul, shrivels the mind, belittles the heart. Knowledge is light. Open the windows of the soul and let it in. Every fact of the universe, of nature, of man, of history, and of God, when known and properly related, will widen one's place to live. To know things in their nature and meaning and to be able properly to relate them is the highest wisdom. Every normal person longs to know and then rejoices in the light or might that solves life's problems. Man was created to be a growing and exhaustless force. The world was given to him to be conquered and possessed. Realms of truth are above and around inviting him to tread their shining coasts, coasts along which Newton dropped his plummet and Herschel sailed a Columbus of the skies.

True knowledge is freedom. This is knowledge not only of things, but knowledge of God as well. It is good because it enlarges vision, constructs new worlds in which to live, multiplies the possibilities of usefulness, creates the conditions wherein the joy and satisfaction which men desire shall be realized, and strikes the shackles from off the soul and sets men free. This is what true knowledge sanctified by divine love will do. Precious beyond rubies is that thing which can invest with celestial dignity the earthly avocation, and, which even when the hands are engaged in downright drudgery, can fill the mind with noble thoughts and carry one through the daily tasks as a son or daughter of the king.

We can push out the walls of our living quarters and make for ourselves a wider place in which to

live by adding appreciation. Appreciation is, fundamentally, soul culture. It is the education and training of the mind to know and to love, to admire and to enjoy beauty, excellence, and greatness, whether in literature, in art, in music, or in men. It is the training of the eye to see the beautiful; the ear to hear the harmonious; the intellect to detect the great; the soul to love and admire the good. Nothing so enlarges life as this. To the man who has the power to perceive the value of things and the ability to relate them accurately, the world is a rich storehouse offering a thousand delights.

A growing sense of the value of things and their place and fitness in the universe is essential to an enlarged life. It is this cultivated sense of appreciation that enables us to discover value in the things around us and to relate that value to our own well-being. This is the deeper insight of the soul which enables one in a mystical way to share the nature of the things that are good and great and beautiful.

This soul culture is not confined to any class. Its magic influence will cause the uncultured to change its mind, manners, and stultified notions and walk forth in the consciousness of refined amiability. It will open the eyes of the gross materialist and cause him to see value in spiritual things. And to the educated, no matter what his refinement, it will bring an added insight and a more refined discrimination that will increase and enlarge the range of

his life. It will help to enlarge the living room of the soul.

III

Life cannot have its fullest meaning, however, unless we push up the roof of our dwelling place and bring the limitless latitude of heaven into our hearts. We must bring God into our lives. With the hand of faith we must reach out and up and grip the realities of the spiritual world. Life is little without God.

Men are trying to get away from God. They are trying to think the spiritual out of their lives. They are trying to dodge conscience and to hush the voice within that would cry out for the consolation of spiritual things. They do not know it, but their turning away from God is making for them a constantly smaller place in which to live. There is a vast unseen misery in the dissatisfied hearts of the men who have no God. There is an untold ache in the hungry, empty lives of men who are fretting and complaining about the ill adjustments of the world. The world may need adjusting, but the adjustment must come through men who have themselves been made right. Things are out of joint because men have rejected God. They will not be set right until men re-enthroned God in the palace of their souls. When God comes into the life there is a new creation; and when the universe within men's hearts is made new the world outside is transformed. The rose is sweeter, the sunset is brighter, the heavens more glorious, all nature be-

comes a rapturous chorus. There is broadness and bigness everywhere.

Land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign;
Where infinite day excludes the night
And pleasures banish pain.

In spite of the infidelity and the materialistic speculations of the skeptics through the centuries, humanity has retained its belief in the future life. No amount of metaphysical reasoning can reduce our conception of self to a narrow isthmus bounded by the two great oceans of eternity. As we stand upon the crumbling sands of time, we look to the future, and as we watch and wait hope pierces the dark veil of obscurity that hangs over the eternity in front and faith sees in the dim distance the shores of that land of love and light beyond the grave.

My life-bark swings on the billow
That rides o'er a boundless sea,
And the sea-gull rocks on the pillow
That is only for him and me.
My vessel is drifting, drifting,
To a land that is dim and gray,
O'er a tide that is shifting, shifting,
But aye to myself I say:
Hope for the long tomorrow;
Strength for the brief today;
Faith to guide o'er the waters wide,
And love in my heart alway.

I know not the final heaven,
Nor whither the journey tends,
And my soul at times is craven
When the storm-wrath waves and rends,

Then a whisper comes to cheer me:

“Peace! for the winds obey

The One who is ever near thee;”

And again to myself I say:

Hope for the long tomorrow;

Strength for the brief today;

Faith to guide o’er the waters wide,

And love in my heart alway.

’Tis a simple refrain only,

Unknowing the schoolman’s lore,

Yet, when my heart is lonely

It haunteth me more and more;

Till I turn to the One who heeds us,

Where He sits in the blue divine,

And tenderly guides and leads us,

And He knows that the prayer is mine:

Hope for the long tomorrow;

Strength for the brief today;

Faith to guide o’er the waters wide,

And love in my heart alway.

